

# A HISTORY OF INDIA

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A HISTORY OF  
INDIA

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO  
THE PRESENT DAY

Sir George Dunbar, Bt.

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## PREFACE

A HISTORY of India is equivalent in range to the history of Europe excluding Russia and starting in the fourth century B.C. From the early dawn of definite Indian history, which came with the Macedonian phalanx of Alexander, the intricate and often shadowy story begins of invasion, of the rise and fall of kingdoms and the conflicts of warring Hindu States.

When the armies of Islam began, in the eleventh century, to pour through the grim gateways of the north-western passes, the religious question was added to the general political confusion. In the eighteenth century a further complication was introduced when the two leading European trading companies, the French and the English, in their manœuvres against each other, plunged into Indian politics.

Up to this time only two governments had given the sub-continent anything approaching unity and frontiers secure from invasion. These were the Empires of the Mauryas and of the Moguls at the height of their power. The Guptas and Harsha, who gave Hindu India her golden age between the fourth and seventh centuries A.D., did not extend their sway over all India. The short-lived almost universal paramountcy of the Afghan Sultanate of Delhi, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, was threatened by Mongol invasions, while the authority of the central government was challenged in the more distant parts of the Empire.

But when the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab, the last of the independent Indian sovereignties, was overthrown in the middle of the nineteenth century, British dominion was supreme throughout the whole country. This power was exercised first by the East India Company and then by the Crown and Parliament, through the direct government of British India and by the acknowledged

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

paramountcy of the Crown over the States Indian India and British India became united by the common interests of peace and security.

Under the shelter of the Stability of Order the politically minded educated classes of British India, influenced by Western democratic ideas began, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to develop Nationalist ambitions. With the twentieth century came India's progress towards responsible government.

It is clearly impossible to compress the history of India into a single volume and deal adequately with every period. All that is hoped for in this attempt is to give, without too great a loss of perspective, some idea of the story of India and to indicate the stages which have led to the political situation of 1935.

Religion which, when all is said, dominates the country; the causes of the decline of empires into chaos; the form of these governments and how they affected the mass of the people; literature and art; commerce and industry; the influence of sea-power upon India's destinies; the building up of British paramountcy; the effect of western ideas upon the politically minded classes—these are the features upon which emphasis has been laid. The details of almost innumerable wars from Alexander's expedition up to the latest frontier campaign can be read in military publications. The geology and geography of the country are left to their own text-books.

In the spelling of Indian names, a matter of infinite variety, the course has been taken of using the forms in most general use, and following the authority of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. The bibliographies at the end of the chapters are not exhaustive, nor do they include all the sources consulted. But, taken with the references given in footnotes to the text, they suggest authorities for the study of special periods and subjects which cannot be detailed in a general History. Wherever possible the most accessible books of reference have been given.

This attempt to compile a History of India from the standpoint of the governed, rather than the many rulers of the country, owes much to the illustrations which make so admirable a running commentary. I take this opportunity to express my most grateful thanks to

## PREFACE

Mrs. Holmes for the wide and illuminating selection of subjects she has made.

Sincere thanks are also due to Sir John Cumming, K.C.I.E.C.S.I., Dr. H. N. Randle, Head of the India Office Library, Mr. W. T. Ottewill, M.B.E., Keeper of the India Office Records, Mr. M. Young, I.C.S. (retired), and Mr. H. G. Rawlinson. Their most kindly and valuable help so generously given it is my privilege here to acknowledge.

G. D.

LONDON,  
*3rd August 1935.*



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Selected and arranged by Winifred Holmes

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## CHAPTER I

### Ancient India

INDIA derives its name from the River Indus and originally<sup>1</sup> meant the country now called Sind with a portion of the Punjab; and it is in the Indus Valley that the earliest traces of civilization in the sub-continent have been brought to light.

Before these discoveries were made the only traces of Man in India in the remote past are easily summarized. They were confined to the quartzite and other hard stone implements of the earliest men (paleolithic), and the stone tools and pottery marking the later improvements of neolithic man, all of which are chiefly found on the Eastern Coast; the gold-mining shafts of a late neolithic settlement at Maski, which are the deepest in the world; prehistoric cemeteries, of which those in the Tinnevely district possibly hold the burial urns of foreign traders in pearls and conch shell; and, at the dawn of Indian history, the cyclopean walls of Giribbaja in Bihar.

But excavations at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa have proved the existence of a great civilization in the west of India, which is believed to have reached its height between about 3250 and 2750 B.C., a time when famous cities were developing their culture from the earlier stone age on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates, the Karun and the Helmund.

In ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia money and labour were lavished on magnificent temples, palaces and tombs, while the mass of the people lived in mud huts. But in Mohenjo Daro,<sup>2</sup> which looks today like the red brick ruins of some working town

<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions of King Darius (521-485 B.C.). Sindhu is the Sanskrit and Hindu the Persian for a river. Hindustan means "The country of the river."  
<sup>2</sup> *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization*, Sir John Marshall, from which this description has been taken.

in Lancashire, the only public structure discovered is the magnificent Public Bath. With this exception the best buildings are the two-storied houses of the ordinary citizens. No temples or palaces, recognizable as such, have been found. The houses had a pipe drainage system from bath-rooms and closets to drains in the street, and rubbish shoots in the walls led down to outside refuse bins. The occupants were merchants and farmers, and the merchants seem to have traded far afield, as five seals of characteristic Indus pattern have been found at Elam and in Mesopotamia. One from Ur and another from Kish are definitely earlier than the Sargonic period. The farmers grew wheat and barley and raised stock which supplied them with beef, mutton, pork and poultry; they also ate quantities of fish and shell-fish. Oxen drew their two-wheeled carts and they kept elephants and camels, but no horses.

Gambling was a favourite amusement, and it is just possible that the oblong bars of copper which have been found represent a metal currency far older than the seventh century B.C. coins of Lydia, which are the earliest known. Their jewellers were skilled workers in gold and silver and ivory. Engraved seals and copper tablets show that their writing was pictographic, but as no bilingual inscriptions have been found, this has defied all attempts to decipher it.

The women spun wool and cotton, and their children played marbles and had little toy carts made of terra-cotta and even of copper.

The warriors took the field with bows, spears, axes and daggers, but without swords, and apparently wore no defensive armour.

Little is known about the religion of the people. The Bull was worshipped, the Mother Goddess held an important place, and there is every indication of Phallic ritual.<sup>1</sup> Sir John Marshall considers certain figurines to be effigies of the Mother Goddess akin to those which have been found from Persia to the Balkans. The Siva-cult of India is composite. One part of it may possibly have been derived from the Indus Valley people, as has been suggested; or they may have derived it from another people, who may again have passed it

<sup>1</sup> *Mohenjo Daro*, Vol. I. pp. 49-51.

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on to the Aryans. On the other hand the fire-pit found in every Aryan home, did not exist.

The dead were usually cremated. But at Harappa a few graves have been found, some of them with traces of food and the small personal belongings which primitive man from the earliest times has offered for the use of the dead.

How far eastward the Indus civilization extended, where it came from and how it perished, are unknown, but the municipal life on the banks of that great river, the "Sea of Sind," was apparently a thing of the past when the Aryan hosts entered the Punjab. At Mohenjo Daro three superimposed cities have been found, and in Khaipur State, on the old course of the Indus, indications of a less advanced civilization were discovered in 1935.

We get our next glimpse of Ancient India from the sacred verses of these Aryans,<sup>1</sup> a people of the same stock as the *The Aryans.* Indians, and speaking a language akin to Persian, Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Celtic and Slavonic.

Their ancient literature throws an interesting light upon the life of the Aryan people, although historical events are so generally ignored that not one single reference is made to their irruption into India. The geography of the *Rigveda* is more illuminating and, amongst others, the five rivers from which the Punjab takes its name can all be identified.

Its importance is, however, far greater than this. Religious thought and philosophy have dominated India since the Aryans occupied the country from the Indus to the mouth of the Ganges and south to the Vindhya hills; and in this ancient literature we reach the foundations upon which Indian religion and philosophy are based. But the western world did not make this discovery—as dramatic as the work which Sir J. Marshall and R. D. Banerji began at Mohenjo Daro in 1922—until the days of Warren Hastings. The East India Company then realized the immense practical value of the study of ancient Sanskrit literature, and the first translations were made (through Persian into English) in 1776. Ten years later Sir William

<sup>1</sup> Aryans, i.e. Kinsmen. Another derivation is "ploughmen" (arare).

Jones of the High Court of Calcutta, by his enthusiastic study of Sanskrit, laid the foundations of the modern science of Comparative Philology. Until the vast store of knowledge enshrined in Sanskrit literature and inscriptions could be translated, the story of India, prior to the Muhammadan invasions of the eleventh century A.D., as recorded by the people themselves, remained an absolute blank.

Cut off for centuries by the great wall of mountains barring the entire land frontier, the Indo-Aryans built up a civilization and culture which was entirely their own. They founded two great religions, their national Brahmanism and the far-reaching faith of Buddhism. Neither invasion nor conquest by Persian or Greek, Scythian or Muhammadan could arrest the national development of the Indo-Aryan people. Just as the cultivator in India today farms his land as his earliest ancestors farmed it, and as fire is produced in religious rites, with two sticks, as it was thousands of years ago, so the life and literature of Aryan civilization went on its conservative way until the days of British occupation.

The most ancient Aryan literature consists of the Four Vedas, still preserved in Vedic, the earliest form of Sanskrit. Veda means sacred lore, and Hindus accept the Four Vedas as inspired, while they generally regard all later *samhitas* (collections) as traditional learning. Even after writing was introduced into India, probably towards the end of the Vedic period, the Vedas continued to be learnt by heart, and were transmitted orally with infallible accuracy by the schools of Vedic study down to the present day; and the hymns of the *Rigveda* alone have been calculated to equal in length the surviving poems of Homer.

At the time of the Aryan settlement in India, Vedic does not appear to have been a popular tongue, but a special language handed down by generations of priest singers. This developed into what came to be called Sanskrit, literally "put together," which was stereotyped by the great grammarian Panini (c. 300 B.C.). The earliest surviving exegetical work in strictly classical Sanskrit is Yaska's *Nirukta*, a Vedic commentary of the fifth century B.C.,<sup>1</sup> and Sanskrit was undoubtedly spoken in the second century B.C.,

<sup>1</sup> Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 269-270.

throughout Aryavarta, the "Land of the Aryans," by the Brahmans and aristocracy.

The lower classes spoke dialects known as Prakrita, the earliest form that has been preserved being Pali. Sanskrit and the Prakrits were therefore current in India much as Norman-French and Saxon were used in England after the Conquest. Sanskrit, the learned language of India, has remained unaltered for more than two thousand years, but the speech of the people has developed into the 222 modern dialects of India. They are based on five parent languages. Austric is the oldest. It is represented in India by the Munda group in Chota Nagpur and the northern districts of the Madras Presidency, and is the language of primitive tribes such as the Gonds. There is no language in the world more widely spread than Austric, for it is traced from Easter Island off South America to Madagascar, and from New Zealand to the Punjab.<sup>1</sup> There is not, however, satisfactory reason to accept Halevy's theory establishing a connexion between the Indus Valley script and that of Easter Island, as the characters are quite different.<sup>2</sup> Dravidian is the most important of the Non-Aryan groups of languages spoken in India today. Tamil and Telugu are its chief representatives, and more than 79 million people in Central and Southern India speak Dravida and its seven allied languages.<sup>3</sup> Indo-Aryan is represented by Hindi (the language of one-third of India), Bengali, Marathi, Gujerathi and Punjabi. Semitic was introduced by the later Muhammadan conquerors; and the fifth group is Tibeto-Chinese.

The Vedas were composed in the chronological order given below, though the dates of their composition are at best pure conjecture based upon the internal evidence of the development of Aryan civilization and literature. On these grounds the oldest hymn, to Ushas the Dawn, is held to have been composed about 1200 B.C.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, relying

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Census Report*, 1911, Vol. I. p. 524.

<sup>2</sup> Authority Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Census Report*, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. pp. 112-113.

on astronomical data, Mr. B. G. Tilak calculates the date of the earliest Vedas to have been about 4500 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

*The Rigveda:* 1028 Hymns (including those in the Eighth Book) to accompany the sacrifices to the gods.

*The Samaveda:* A collection of chants taken from the Rigveda.

*The Yajurveda:* (1) The Black; sacrificial prayers in verse and the earliest Vedic prose mixed with commentaries.

(2) The White; in which the prose commentaries are separated from the litanies.

*The Atharvaveda:* Which gives the still older belief of the people in evil spirits, spells and incantations. This Veda and the Rigveda taken together are of the greatest value, as they describe the religious beliefs of the people three thousand years ago and more. The Atharvaveda was not for some time recognized as canonical, and is not now universally admitted by the Brahmans of Southern India.

It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between sacrifice and sorcery in the Vedic religion, of which witch-craft is an essential element.<sup>2</sup> Although the gods might be thought of as animals, their direct worship in this form is hardly found in the *Rigveda*, a remarkable fact in view of the snake worship of later times. There is no trace of totemism, but the use in war of an image of Indra, god of the storm, is an example of fetishism.

Between about 800-600 B.C., there appeared religious manuals in prose to explain to the priest the inner meaning of the sacrifices; they are called *Brahmanas*. To these were added theosophic meditations for the use of hermits in their forest retreats, and consequently called *Aranyakas* or Forest Books. There were three of these and each contained an *Upanishad*, so called because they were taught in secret.

The long series of the *Upanishads*, the earliest of which must be as old as 600 B.C., closes the second stage of Vedic literature. They are a mixture of half-poetical and half-philosophic speculations

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (Poona, 1903), where European authorities supporting him are cited. Tilak's reasoning in support of the extreme antiquity of Aryan civilization, beginning between 6000 and 4000 B.C., is given in *Orion, or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas* (Poona, 1916).

<sup>2</sup> Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 191.



and metaphysical dialogues, and their importance lies in the fact that they teach what is really a new religion.

The *Rigveda*, with the exception of passages in the tenth and last book, was frankly polytheistic. But the *Upanishads* speak of a deity embracing all the gods as well as the forces of nature. This was Brahma the "holy power," or Atma "The Self, the only Reality." Their goal is not worldly advantages and eternal happiness gained by sacrifices, but freedom from the cares of this present world by the merging of the soul in the world-soul through true knowledge. This has represented the philosophic side of Hinduism from that day to this. Although there are over a hundred *Upanishads*, the most important and probably the oldest being the Chandogya of the *Samaveda* and the Brihadaranyaka, the phrase "that art thou" is held to sum up the entire teaching of what is known as the Vedanta system.

The third stage of Vedic literature began, possibly about 600 B.C., with the first Sutras, which are textbooks regulating the sacrificial rites, and crystallizing customary law and practice. They are so compressed that commentaries are necessary to understand them. As an old Hindu saying puts it, the composers of the grammatical Sutras delighted as much in the saving of a short vowel as in the birth of a son; and it must be remembered that a Brahman believes he cannot gain Heaven without a son to perform his funeral rites.

This Vedic literature and the epics, codes of laws and legends which followed, are the sole sources of knowledge of the Aryans for many hundreds of years; and facts can only be gathered by inference. On the other hand their religious and social developments can be clearly traced, the explanation being that their literature was entirely controlled by the priests to whom political history was nothing, but in whose eyes religion and philosophy, law, social institutions and science were alone worthy of consideration. It is not until we come to the accounts of North-Western India, due to Persian and Greek invasions, that anything approaching chronology, history, or details about the country and its inhabitants can be found. The approximate years of Gautama Buddha's birth and death stand out alone amidst the shadows. It is the foreigner, in the form of the Persian invader, who

supplies us with the first accurate date, relating to the north-western fringe of the country. Accounts of India, some of them very highly coloured, were written by the Greeks from the time of the Persian king Artaxerxes Mnemon, but history only begins with the expedition of Alexander the Great, and the arrival of Megasthenes, ambassador of Seleucus Nicator, at the court of the first Emperor of India.

There are geographical and ethnological arguments<sup>1</sup> in favour of the theory that the Indo-Aryan race originally came from the fertile plains of Austria and Hungary and the highlands of Bohemia. The people who lived in this country about 2500 B.C. have been given the name of Wiros. It has been put forward that some of their tribes migrated from Europe into Asia, reaching Bactria (Balkh) sometime between 2000 and 1500 B.C. Then driven on by the desiccation of Central Asia, which had already begun, they came south over the passes of the Hindu Kush into Afghanistan. From there the Aryans poured down into the plains, the first of a line of conquerors through the gateways of the Kabul, the Kurram and the Gumal rivers.

However that may be, the Aryan movement into India was the progress of a nation of five peoples divided into a number of tribes in the patriarchal family state.

The Saxon invaders of Britain, after the withdrawal of the Roman garrisons, make an interesting comparison with the Indo-Aryans. The Saxons, too, brought their own women with them. Their society was made up of thanes and priests of gentle blood, farmers who were unfree, and women-servants and menials who were slaves to be bought and sold like cattle. The Saxon kings were hereditary, and were the leaders in war, having also their body-guards of personal retainers. They presided at the great feasts and sacrifices, and were the final source of justice. Their acts, however, had to be confirmed by popular assemblies. Land was allotted to groups of kinsmen. Saxon houses were built of timber with barns, store-houses and sheds clustering about them. The fields were ploughed with oxen, and manured.

<sup>1</sup> See *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. pp. 66-76.

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Before the Aryans had absorbed Northern India south-east of the modern Ambala, their life was simple and primitive. The invaders fought their way into the country, forming village settlements on clearings they made in the forest as they went. The villages seem to have been groups of houses and sheds built of wood and bamboo, with the sacred domestic fire burning on every hearth. The family dwellings clustered as a rule round a fortified post.

The families ploughed their allotments with teams of six, eight or even twelve oxen, and grew what may perhaps have been barley on their manured and irrigated fields; the cattle were driven out by the herdsmen to graze in the surrounding forest. Cows were milked, and cakes were made of flour and butter. Vegetables and fruit, then as now, were their staple diet, and butter was used as much as it is today. Oxen, sheep and goats were habitually killed for food and offered in sacrifices to the gods. Horse flesh is supposed to have been eaten only at the horse sacrifices, which were performed by the kings in assertion of their royal power; and eaten with the object of gaining the strength and speed of the animal. The popular beverage was *sura*, which was distilled from grain, and highly intoxicating.

The dress of the Vedic Indians consisted 'as a rule of two or three garments, generally of wool, but sometimes of skins. They combed and oiled their hair, the women wore it plaited and in some cases the men wore theirs in coils. In the early days the Aryans were on what may be described as the "cow" standard, but gold was highly valued and used by all who could afford it for neck and breast ornaments and ear-rings. Much of their gold was obtained from the river beds, and they called the Indus the "Golden River."

The Aryans were great hunters. There are references in the *Rigveda* to the capture of lions in snares, of antelope caught in pits, and of boar-hunting with dogs. They were not a race of fishermen; and when the Vedic Indian took to the waters of the Indus he seems to have relied on a dug-out and a paddle, and never used rudder or sails.

In these early stages of their civilization, the ordinary tasks of

life were performed by the free men of the village, all of whom were then grouped together as the Vis class of the community. The man who combined the trades of carpenter, joiner and wheel-wright had the place of honour, for it was he who made the chariot wheels used in war. Next came the smith who hammered out the domestic utensils in copper. The women sewed, wove cloth and plaited mats from grass or reeds.

The point to notice is that none of the occupations given in the *Rigveda* were looked upon as other than honourable; the time was yet to come when some of them would be branded as debasing.

Open-air dancing both by girls and men was a popular amusement, and the people were fond of singing. Their musical instruments were lutes, flutes and drums. But the favourite sport of the Aryans, a horse-loving and chivalrous people, was chariot-racing, closely followed by gambling with a number of brown nuts used as dice. The Aryans were inveterate gamblers, even staking their wives and their personal freedom on a throw. To quote "The Gambler's Lament," which is the oldest secular poem in the Vedas:

"My wife rejects me and her mother hates me;  
The gamester finds no pity for his troubles.  
No better use can I see for a gambler  
Than for a costly horse worn out and aged."<sup>1</sup>

During the *Rigveda* period the religion of the people was comparatively simple in spite of the host of deities to whom sacrifices were made by the priests. It was the worship of nature personified in its various forms; and from its sacrificial rites Indo-Aryan theological speculation started and developed. First came Dyaus, god of the sky, coupled with Prithivi, the earth; later on Varuna took the place of Dyaus. Varuna, representing cosmic and moral order, to whom the most exalted hymns in the *Rigveda* are addressed, was in turn superseded as the popular deity by Indra. There were five solar gods and one of them, Vishnu, the personification of the swift-moving sun, was later to become one of the two great gods of India. Siva, his rival, was then

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, X 34.

known as Rudra, the storm god; but in the days of the *Rigveda* the most important deities after Indra were Agni the fire god, and the Soma. Agni was worshipped as the sun in the sky, as the lightning flash and as the fire burning on the domestic hearth. Soma was the sacred intoxicating drink, which formed the most important offering in the Vedic sacrifice. The plant from which it was made has not been identified.

There were no human sacrifices; a substitute was used in the Purushamedha, as this rite was called. The offerings were of flesh and the soma, milk, grain and clarified butter. But although the killing of bulls and cows and the eating of beef (abhorrent in Hindu India for the past two thousand years) is found in the *Rigveda*, the germs of later day Hinduism are apparent. The late tenth book indicates the process of creation as the evolution of "being" from "not being," the unity of the universe is asserted, and the multiplicity of the gods is called in question.

The Aryans peopled the world around them with a host of spirits, from the powerful gods propitiated by the priests, who alone knew the rites which would win favour, down to the elves and sprites in the forest and the streams; beliefs which are reflected in the animism of existing primitive tribes such as those living among the mountain ranges between Assam and Tibet.

The position of the Brahmans, that is to say the priestly class, was already one of assured dignity and importance. It would seem that the tribal kings had almost entirely delegated their earlier functions as regards sacrifice to the Brahmans, the priests; while on the secular side their power was consolidated by the close personal relationship between the ruler and his *purohita*, who was the domestic chaplain of the governing class. Brahmans could marry, and the term Brahmana<sup>1</sup> (descendant of a Brahman) is the only existing evidence as to whether the priesthood was or was not then hereditary.

In the time of the early Vedas there was neither child marriage nor apparently any prohibition of marriage within the *gotra* (family or clan) other than between near relatives such as brother and sister. The early custom was for a

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, I. 164, 45; VI. 75, 10, etc.

widow to marry the brother or nearest kinsman of the dead man,<sup>1</sup> when no son was already born. There is also evidence<sup>2</sup> that a woman was free to marry again if her husband entirely disappeared.

Polyandry was unknown, but a Vedic Indian could have more than one wife, although references to monogamy in the *Rigveda* show that a higher ideal of morality was growing. Speaking generally, men and women had considerable freedom in choosing a wife or a husband.

The wedding festivities included the killing of cows at the bride's house for the entertainment of the guests. The essential part of the ceremony itself consisted in the bridegroom taking his wife's hand, and leading her round her own family fire, before the bridal procession escorted the newly married pair to the bride's future home.

The long hymn,<sup>3</sup> sung during the ceremony, bears witness to the high value placed on marriage, a union which human action could not sever. On her marriage a wife was given in early Vedic times an honoured position in the household and was a regular participator in the religious offerings of her husband.

During the Vedic age the custom known as *suttee*, by which the widow was burned on the death of her husband, was not followed; but that this was an ancient custom which had fallen into abeyance is possible from a reference in the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>4</sup>

The dead were either buried, or cremated, and the ashes buried, and as time went on burial became rarer. In the time of the *Rigveda* only vague ideas existed as regards a future state. It was believed that there were dwelling-places for the souls of men with the gods of the world of Yama, first of the dead and their king, or that the spirit departed to the waters or the plants. No idea of punishment after death can be found in the *Rigveda*.

At the time of the invasion of India an Aryan warrior meant a man who could handle a weapon, without class distinction. The army was led by the king in person and the members of the noble families (Kshatriyas), who wore helmets, and corselets of flexible armour, and fought in chariots.

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, X. 18, 8, supported by Sutra evidence.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, VI. 49, 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, X. 85

<sup>4</sup> *Arth.*, XVIII. 3, 1.

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The common people (Vis) fought on foot. The principal weapon was the bow. There does not appear to have been the smallest conception of tactics, and the army advanced in a confused mass shouting their battle cry, with flags flying and drums beating.

An Indo-Aryan tribe was made up of three classes—the Brahman, the Kshatriya and the Vis (Vaisya), with a king (*rajan*) at the head of it. The kingship seems normally to have been hereditary, but the king may sometimes have been elected from among the Kshatriya. His power was insecure and his acts had to be confirmed by assemblies of the men of the tribe, not unlike the Anglo-Saxon moot. He was the protector of his people and the fount of justice; and in return for his services he received the obedience of his subjects, who contributed towards the upkeep of the royal state. The king was not, in those early days, the recognized owner of the soil, and these contributions were at first more or less voluntary. In the business of government the king was advised by his domestic chaplain, the *purohita*.

The village was not then a recognized legal unit, and it is not known if the office of headman<sup>1</sup> was hereditary, but he presumably had civil and military control over his community. Reference is made in the *Yajurveda* to a village judge, but in the earlier period the punishment of a crime such as theft rested with the person who had been wronged. There is no mention in the *Rigveda* of capital punishment.

At the time of the Indo-Aryan invasion the greater part at least of the sub-continent was occupied by the Dravidians, whom their conquerors called Dasas or Dasyus. The word Dravidian is derived from Dravida, the old name of the Tamil country in Southern India. Dasyu means "native" as opposed to Aryan, in a very wide sense, covering many races and degrees of culture. The *Rigveda* describes the Dasyus as a black-skinned people with broad noses; and the official description of the modern Dravidians is "short stature, complexion approaching black, head long, nose very broad." The Aryans were tall and fair with clear-cut

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, X. 62, 11 and 107, 5.

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features; and the colour bar between the two is unquestionably one of the main origins of the caste system. The Dravidians lived in fortified villages and owned large herds of cattle. Their religion was phallic.

But even the Dravidians cannot be regarded with certainty as the original inhabitants of the country. From the *Pre-Dravidians*. evidence of the languages still spoken in India it would seem that the Austric element is even older and that this race, in yet earlier times, may have been conquered and partially absorbed by invading hosts from the west, the people we now call Dravidian. The possibility of this theory is based on the present-day survival of the large isolated community of Brahui-speaking people in Baluchistan; they might, however, represent either a rear-guard of invasion coming east, or an overflow westward from India. It is in the primitive tribes of the jungles and hills of India, such as the Bhils and the Minas of the south, that the aborigines of the country may be found.

The owners of the soil stood no chance against the Aryan invaders. The Dravidians were a stout-hearted people, but their settlements were overwhelmed by the hosts breaking over them like a rising tide. It was a struggle between the Metal and the Stone Age, and the Aryans carried the earth works and stockades of the Dasas, took their land, and made slaves of the people in droves. Only towards the south was the Aryan invasion checked, and checked for centuries, by the Vindhya Hills and their almost impenetrable forests.

As the Aryans advanced beyond what is now the Punjab, they lost their earlier character of simple loosely knit communities. The pressure of the hostile race surrounding them, whose country they were conquering, whose colour they despised and whose religion they hated, consolidated the Aryan tribes into small kingdoms and republics.

The lesser chiefs lost their independence and became the leaders of the fighting men, while the Kshatriya class in general rose steadily to a position of great and clearly-defined superiority over the common people, the Vaisya. The Kshatriyas were warriors, though all warriors were not

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Society.*



Kshatriyas. Their status was hereditary, but it was probably by no means impossible for a man of the Vaisya class of those times to become a Kshatriya.<sup>1</sup> Later on Kshatriya included the fighting retainers, who increased in numbers with the growth of the States; and in the end the order gave to India that magnificent example of high courage and romantic spirit, the Rajput.

In the confusion and stress of these wars of invasion, which kept the national leaders fighting in the field, the Brahmans seized the golden opportunity to make their position impregnable. Only the priests could ensure the correct performance of the acts of sacrifice, and these rites, vital elements in the national life, became more and more complicated. It was soon recognized that the alliance of the military Kshatriya and the intellectual Brahman was essential for ordered government, while the king's power depended upon popular support in the tribal assembly, the *sabha*.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the importance of the priests was consolidated by the confidential position occupied by the royal chaplain, the *purohita*, who accompanied the king into battle to pray for the success of his arms and cast spells upon the enemy. Behind the spear-head of invasion the mass of the people, the Vaisyas, devoted themselves more and more to farming and trade. Meanwhile a fourth class, the Sudra, was added to the three estates of the Aryan people. Sudra was the name eventually given by the Vedic Indians to their enemies, the Dasas, and they were first brought into the community as captured slaves. Later on the Dravidians were absorbed by peaceful means, and without loss of personal liberty, and Sudra meant not only slaves but free men of humble occupations.

Brahman and Kshatriya were the two upper classes, but the gap between them and the Vaisya was as nothing to the gulf separating the Vaisya from the Dravidian Sudra. The Aryans were tall and fair, the Dravidians were dark-skinned; and *varna*, which means colour in Sanskrit, was the insuperable barrier between the two races. These were the two original divisions as given in the *Rigveda*, and in contrast to the Saxon, the Dane and the Norman who invaded

<sup>1</sup> *Vedic Index*, Vol. I. p. 207, quoting *Rigv.*, VII. 104, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Atharvaveda*, III. 4, 6.

England, the Aryans shunned the mixed marriages which would inevitably have absorbed them in the mass of the conquered race. Social exclusion took the place of the earlier policy when a Dravidian was either killed at sight or made into a slave. The Brahmanas give four colours: white for the Brahman, red for the Kshatriya, yellow for the Vaisya and black for the Sudra; and it has been suggested that this classification came from the colour of the garments worn by them.<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of the Chinese, no civilization now in existence is as ancient as that of India, and the Hindu caste system is its most striking feature. This institution is peculiar to India, and from the colour bar between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, Brahmanism has evolved the complicated social structure of almost innumerable castes and sub-castes which are to be found today.

Brahmanism is based, unlike the other great religions of India, on the family as the religious unit; and on the family, with the Brahman priest as its keystone, caste was founded. The fundamental idea of caste is that the individual does not live for himself, and this theory distributes the power, prestige, privileges and goods of this world according to functions.<sup>2</sup>

A caste is a group of families bound to each other by special rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially as regards marriage and food. The marriage laws are the most rigid, for caste is an hereditary organization in which a man must marry outside his family and inside his caste. In matters of eating, drinking and touch, the rules are not quite so narrow.

A governing body called a *panchayat*, established by each caste other than the highest, deals with any infringement of its rules, which naturally vary. These offences originally included more than strictly social matters. Immorality, breach of promise of marriage, debt, minor assaults and other cases were dealt with as well. This in effect made each caste a small self-governing society within the nation, as regards its internal affairs.

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Caste*, Shamasastri, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, B. Prasad, p. 338.

Caste is not determined by race, religious opinions with certain limits, nor occupations unless they involve caste defilement. The traditional occupation of the caste is naturally the more favoured. A Brahman as belonging to the highest caste would normally live by officiating as a priest (his exclusive right) and by teaching, but he might, if his circumstances were straitened, become a soldier, a mason, or even a labourer. In fact, today, Brahmans may be found in almost any employment other than casual labourer, sweeper and scavenger. But the caste man must follow the set rules governing his own group and avoid giving offence to others.

Admission to an established caste is solely by birth. The social status of a Hindu depends entirely upon the traditional importance of the caste into which it was his lot to be born. It is possible for a ruling prince to belong to one of the low castes, and the touch of his hand would defile the food of a pauper in the streets were that pauper a Brahman.

It is impossible for anyone to rise to a higher caste or sink to a lower one. On the other hand serious violation of the caste law may, by the vote of the caste assembly, be punished by expulsion from the caste. This sentence means ostracism by members of even the lowest sub-caste in existence, and is social death should the decision be permanent. Except in extreme cases of the violation of caste rules something in the nature of a fine would usually be imposed.

The Hindu rule of life is called *dharma*. This in the *Rigveda* means law or custom. Later it was given a wider meaning. Proceeding from the will of the Creator it included truth, morality, and charity; and became the Law over all human society. All persons who do not follow the Hindu rule of life are regarded by members of that faith as completely outside the pale; and this consequently includes all Europeans, however high their official position in India or their standing in western society.

The orthodox Hindu believes caste to be of divine origin. The *Purusha-Sukta*,<sup>1</sup> the Hymn of Man, divides mankind into Brahman, Rajanya, Vaisya and Sudra. These four orders are there said to have sprung from the mouth, the arms,

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, X. 90, 12.

the thighs and the feet of the Creator, and in this way the primacy of the Brahman, the strength of the Rajanya (or Kshatriya), the capacity for useful occupations of the Vaisya and the low position of the Sudra were derived. These origins are explained in the *Taittiriya Samhita* of the Black *Yajurveda*. For example the Sudra, being created from the feet, was to be the transporter of others and live by the use of his feet.

But there is no evidence that the Aryans were under the caste system while they were still in the Punjab, where the *Rigveda* was composed.<sup>1</sup> The *Yajurveda* tells a different story. By this time the hub of Aryan civilization had shifted from the Indus and its tributaries to Kurukshetra. Here, under the influence of the newly-developed Brahmanism, caste was evolved from the four orders of society into its four great divisions..

New castes were originally formed by mixed marriages or in the following ways, which operate to the present day:

- (i) A tribe or clan of aborigines becoming Hindus under their tribal name, or a new one.
- (ii) A change by a body of people from their traditional occupation to another.
- (iii) Religious sects forming their own castes.
- (iv) Migration.
- (v) Change of custom, either by neglect or the adoption of new ceremonial.

All these methods add greatly to the confusion which exists as to the precedence of castes. It will be seen that while descent is undoubtedly a chief factor it is not the only one in the formation of a caste.

The history of India until the time of British supremacy is a long story of warfare and confusion broken by periods of peace under a strong central government. Invaders poured into the

<sup>1</sup> The term Panchanada, "Land of the Five Streams," to describe the Punjab, does not occur until the epic period. For the opinion that much of the *Rigveda* was composed further east than the Punjab see authorities quoted in *Vedic Index*, Vol. I. p. 468.

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country, empires rose and fell, but through all these changes and chances the system of caste has held the Hindu steadfast to his social obligations, his religious duties and his economic and civic responsibilities. To this is due the protection of the widow and orphan, the aged and the infirm, for it must be remembered that there are no poor laws in India. It is to this social organization that Hindu India owes its perfections in craftsmanship evolved through countless generations, and to which it is indebted for the steady pursuit of knowledge and culture by the classes marked out as students and teachers. Caste cannot be judged by western standards and ideas, but what it has meant to India is summed up by Monier Williams: "Caste has been useful in promoting self-sacrifice, in securing subordination of the individual to an organized body, in restraining vice and in preventing pauperism."

There is, however, another side to the picture, as the pitiable state of the very lowest castes (the "untouchables"), who number 20 per cent. of the population of British India alone, still bears witness in many districts. But today social, economic and political influences are gradually weakening the iron rules of a system which touches daily life at nearly every point and presents a philosophy of existence fundamentally at variance with the creeds of the west. The unavoidable mingling of castes in the trains and the trams, the mills and the mines of twentieth-century India, and the demand of the educated classes for a more democratic form of government are, however slowly, making their impression upon the immemorial social barriers. This movement has the sympathetic support of many of India's progressive leaders, and although the ancient tradition and canons of Hindu orthodoxy held by one-eighth of the population of the globe are not likely to suffer sudden or violent alterations, yet signs are not lacking that an appreciable change in the caste system may be brought about by the people of India.

As the Aryans settled down in the conquered territory life became more complex. The royal household consisted of many court officials. Local government was carried on by the headmen (*gramani*) of the villages as in earlier times, but the status of the industrial classes, and of women in general, was sinking.

No Sudra was ever regarded as Aryan and "twice-born," that is to say, admitted into the religious community by the investiture of the sacred cord; but the Sudras were drawing nearer to the position to which the humbler of the Vaisyas were being reduced, and the Vaisyas were splitting up into a number of divisions by the introduction of the caste system.

This system swept Vaisya and Sudra alike into an ever-increasing number of endogamous <sup>1</sup> hereditary groups which were becoming restricted to a small number of occupations. In this organization of society the Kshatriya was taken as the norm and the other castes were defined according to the relations which they bore to him. An idea of the relative value of the different castes is given in the Sutrās. In the matter of private vengeance, tempered by the fining system, a Kshatriya is rated at 1000 cows, a Vaisya at 100, and a Sudra or a woman, at 10; with a bull to the king over and above the fine.<sup>2</sup>

While agriculture remained based upon the village community system of small holdings, the period of the later Samhitas (c. 800-600 B.C.), shows a remarkable advance in industrial life. Houses were still built of wood, as they were in England by the survivors of the great Saxon families up to the time of King John. But Aryan civilization had evolved a host of trades, from jewellers, usurers and weavers to sellers of dried fish and professional acrobats, while two important personages in later village life had made their appearance, the astrologer and the barber. As yet there was no coinage, but gold in necklaces or by weight may have begun to eke out a currency of cattle; and the use of silver was known.

The Vedic Indian continued to eat meat, for the doctrine of *ahimsa*, which forbids injury to any animals, had yet to be developed. But already we find an indication <sup>3</sup> of the future renunciation of meat by a whole people.

The practice of medicine, which seems to have reached a relatively

<sup>1</sup> Persons who marry only within the limits of a recognized group.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. pp 128, 134

<sup>3</sup> *Atharvaveda*, VI. 70, 1, where meat is classed with intoxicating liquor as an evil.

high level in the *Rigveda* period, had sunk to the use of spells by the time the *Atharvaveda* was composed. Though as an offset to this the science of Astronomy had made considerable progress.<sup>1</sup>

But the greatest advance is to be seen in religion and philosophy.

*Religion.* The head of the family still performed the household rites, but public sacrifice of animals and the soma had grown into an elaborate ceremony requiring sixteen or seventeen priests, and prolonged in certain ritual, up to a year or even more. In religious thought a striking development was the doctrine of transmigration. This was foreshadowed in the Brahmanas in the warning that a man may die repeated deaths in the next world, and was definitely taught in the *Upanishads*.

The new doctrine held out the peace of heaven to the ascetic; purgatory in the moon to those who lacked the saving grace of *brahman*, with later birth as a plant or a man; and for the wicked rebirth as outcastes, dogs, swine or reptiles. *Brahman*, "The Holy Power," or *atman*, "The Self," is taught in the *Upanishads* as the one underlying reality. Hinduism holds that the "Absolute" of rationalism and of mystic contemplation is unknowable, and intelligence without thought is ascribed to it. The doctrine of *maya*, as taught by Sarkara, that all existence (with certain qualifications) is mere illusion, did not appear until the ninth century A.D., and it is not universally held by Hindus.<sup>2</sup>

Influenced to some extent by the animist beliefs of the earlier inhabitants of the country (which still survive among the primitive tribes), the doctrine of transmigration came into the national creed with the *Upanishads* about the sixth century B.C. Later there was added the pendent dogma of *karman* (action), which determines on a man's death the nature of his next birth.

While philosophy was developing on these lines the movement towards the religion of modern India had begun. Rudra, with his

<sup>1</sup> For intercalation to correct the more primitive year of 12 months of 30 days see *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. pp. 139, 140.

<sup>2</sup> Professor S. Rhadakrishnan in *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 61-71, examines the theory of *maya* in detail.

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accretions from Dravidian sources, especially those connected with sex-worship, became Siva "the auspicious," the dominating national deity, while a relic of the primitive past survived in Kali with her garland of human skulls. Vishnu gained a place of great importance in the sacrificial rites and, contrasting with Siva the Destroyer, Vaishnavism held the idea of a personal god of love, who dwelt among men in his *avatars* (incarnations). Krishna appeared as the god of laughter and song, and the joy of life.

But with all the developments and differences which have been evolved in the comprehensive faith of Hinduism, and to which further reference will be made, the Hindus have remained a distinct cultural unit, with a common history, a common literature and a common civilization.<sup>1</sup> The underlying essentials of Hinduism are what they have been from time immemorial, and the sacred customs of traditional family and caste life, which take the place of the moral law in other countries, have through the centuries been fervently held as inviolable. Add to the sacredness of custom the belief that every god must be worshipped in accordance with what are conceived to be his wishes, and it is possible to understand the Tantric phase of Hinduism with its sexual rites, and the age-long persistence of child-marriage, female infanticide and *suttee*, customs which cannot be regarded as an integral part of the Hindu religion.

The position of the father, the head of the family, grew stronger as time went on. Possibly as early as the eighth century B.C. the rule arose that a man must not eat with his wife, the Satapatha Brahmana pronouncing that "from him who does not a vigorous son is born." About a hundred and fifty years later it was customary for boys of the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya castes to be sent for several years to Brahman schools, where the education was of course essentially religious. No one but a Brahman could teach, and only boys of the "twice-born" castes were admitted. Girls received no education,<sup>2</sup> and even today "literacy has hardly touched the fringe of the female population,"<sup>3</sup> in spite of government and non-official efforts.

<sup>1</sup> *The Hindu View of Life*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See *A Primer of Hinduism*, J. N. Farquhar.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission* (Simon Report), Vol. I. p. 392.



The Hindu religion, as described in these pages, only touches the small literate portion of its adherents in India today. The religion of the overwhelming majority of the people consists in caste customs, family observances and the propitiation of the good and evil spirits of the unseen world around them. Their hopes for a future life are in the care of the village priests, and if they think of a Supreme Being at all His benevolence is assumed as a matter of course.

With their conquests in Northern India consolidated, the Aryan tribes began to make war on each other; and the Kurus to the west of the Ganges and their allies the Panchalas on the left bank of that river, emerge for a time as dominating peoples. Neither these hostilities, nor the lines of tribal kings whose names have survived, in any way affect the course of Indian history. But between the sixth century B.C. and the invasion of the Punjab by Alexander of Macedon, there occurred a series of events of great importance. Two religions were founded; the Indus Valley and part of the Punjab came under foreign occupation; the two famous Indian epics were taking shape; and lastly, this period saw the rise of the kingdom of Magadha, destined to establish two mighty empires.

The second half of the sixth century B.C. was a time of great spiritual activity in Aryan India. A number of schools of religious thought had by this time dissented from the orthodoxy of the pantheistic Vedanta, which is still the dominant philosophy of Brahmanism; and of these two rose to the rank of religions, Jainism and Buddhism.

They followed the same lines as the Sankhya system, a philosophy of considerable influence in India, which taught the complete independence of the human mind and tried to solve its problems by pure reason; and both, in common with the Sankhya system, while acknowledging the lower gods of Brahmanism, denied the existence of a Supreme Deity. But none of the religious systems, other than purely Materialist philosophy, ever denied the theory which has always dominated the belief of the Indian people, that every individual after death experiences a series of new existences in heavens or hells as men or as animals, or in plants, by way of reward or punishment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Sanskrit Literature*, Ch. XV.

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There were many forerunners, both of Vardhamana Mahavira, the great reformer of the Jain faith and of Gautama Buddha. Jainism could point to its twenty-three prophets, and twenty-four earlier Buddhas (enlightened ones) had foretold the coming of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha.

Vardhamana, the future Mahavira, was the son of the head of the warrior house of the Jnatikas, who lived near Videha, then the capital of a republic, and one of the greatest cities in India. Through his mother Vardhamana was closely related to Bimbisara, King of Magadha, the patron of Buddha and the most powerful ruler in Eastern India.

Born about the year 540 B.C., Vardhamana lived until he was thirty the ordinary life of a man in his position, settled down and married. When his parents died he left his home and his possessions behind him and became a wanderer. For thirteen years he roamed about the country patiently enduring the most abject privations and living a life of meditation and chastity while he fully subdued his senses. In this extreme asceticism he found, as the Jains record, infinite knowledge and was known after this as Mahavira (the great hero) or Jina (the conqueror).

It is believed that his father and mother had been followers of the teaching of Parsva, and this was the doctrine which with some additions was taught by Mahavira.

Parsva, who is supposed to have lived about the eighth century B.C., had insisted on four vows: Not to injure life in any form, and the Jains hold that even what is generally considered lifeless matter has a soul; to speak the truth; not to steal; and take the vow of poverty. To these Mahavira added chastity, and nakedness for the ascetic. Laymen were to observe these precepts as far as their occupations allowed.

The austerities of Jainism are of two kinds. One is external, such as fasting even to the length of religious suicide, and the practice of yoga, which consists of prolonged meditation in private in certain recognized postures.

The internal act of discipline is intensive contemplation. In its final stages *karma* is annihilated and the soul leaves the body to be

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free for ever; *karma* being bondage of works by which the merits and demerits of an individual's previous existence have determined his condition in his present life. For Jainism is a religion of pessimism and looks upon life as an evil perpetuated by transmigration; and it accordingly holds that only the attainment of right knowledge can put an end to the succession of rebirths.

Mahavira spent the remainder of his life preaching his gospel through Magadha and Videha, troubled for a number of years by a rival teacher Gosala, whose colourable imitation of his doctrines had other attractions than stern ascetism. He died, probably about 468 B.C.,<sup>1</sup> at Pawa, near Giribbaja, a place of Jain pilgrimage to this day. He is believed to have survived his great religious rival Gautama Buddha by more than ten years.

The Jain sacred writings are a mixture of prose and verse called the *Agama*, which was preserved orally until A.D. 454.

*Literature.* The non-canonical works are mostly commentaries, poems, legends of saints and religious history. The language of this literature is partly a Prakrit Jain Maharastri and partly Sanskrit; and it is possible that the oldest of the maxims, parables, dialogues, and ballads may have come down from the first disciples of Mahavira. The Jains honour their twenty-four Jinas and venerate the three Jain jewels of Right Faith, Right Action, and Right Morals.

The later history of this strikingly austere faith, which has remained unchanged through twenty centuries, supporting its religious communities and never attempting widespread missionary effort, is soon told.

*Later History.* The religion won a foothold in the kingdoms of Magadha and Kalinga in the east, and Ujain in Central India became one of its most important centres. But in about 300 B.C. Jainism was losing its hold in Eastern India, and the Jains began their migration westwards to found the settlements in Ajmer and Merwara where they live in slowly decreasing numbers today.<sup>2</sup>

It was at this period that the first signs of schism made their appearance and these came to a head in about A.D. 80, splitting

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. pp. 155, 156, 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I.

Jainism into the two sects of Svetambara (white-robed) and Digambara (naked, or sky-clad), of whom only the former admit nuns as well as monks. As the years went on Jainism, which had arisen as a form of protestantism against the authority of the Brahman scriptures, found the force of circumstances too strong, and the caste system was adopted. The vow not to take life prevented the Jains from following professions such as agriculture, so they took to commerce and prosper today as money-lenders.

Jain architecture developed slowly. Its earliest form is to be found in the rock-hewn caves of Orissa, some of which are elaborately carved, dating from perhaps the middle of the first century B.C. But it was not until about 900 A.D. that the Jains created a type of their own based on Hindu temples. Great domed roofs magnificently carved with figures and designs, and high towers lavishly ornamented are its most striking features, and these are exemplified at Khajuraho, where Jain and Brahmanical temples are built in similar style.

The Jains have produced valuable works in Sanskrit on grammar and astronomy, and have so influenced the development of southern languages such as Tamil, Kanarese, and Telugu, that they have won for themselves an important place in the literature and civilization of India.

There are superficial points of resemblance in the beginnings of Jainism and Buddhism. Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha were contemporaries, both were members of important families; and each had been preceded by a long line of forerunners. Alike they forsook the luxury of their homes at about the age of thirty and sought religious truth by earnest meditation in the midst of extreme hardship and privation. Both faiths deny the existence of an Almighty God, and are religions of pessimism, regarding life as an evil. The two founders equally denied the sanctity of the Vedas, together with the sacrificial ritual and the claims of spiritual superiority of the Brahmans. But they accepted the ascetic practices and the general rule of life decreed by Brahmanism. Monks and nuns are to be found in each religion, but while among the Jains the lay community has always been the more

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important element, the religious orders are the dominating factor in Buddhism.

This is the point at which similarity ends. In every other respect, and in the doctrines which are the chief notes of the two religions Jainism and Buddhism are poles apart.

*Buddha,  
His Life and  
Doctrines.* was born about the year 563 B.C., at Lumbini, near Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakiyan republic. His father at one time held the elected office of president of the State assembly and was a man of considerable importance. Disgusted by the luxury of his home Gautama, when he was twenty-nine, made his great Renunciation of the world and went to Gaya, where he lived a life of rigid asceticism for about six years. Then as he sat in meditation under the sacred tree the Enlightenment came to him. He had found the Middle Way and the Eight-Fold Path. The Middle Way shunned the excesses of self-indulgence on the one hand, and avoided on the other the self-torturing asceticism which he had tried and found wanting. The Eight-fold Path was to seek what is right in the eight categories into which thought, word and deed were divided.

Buddha never specifically rejected the general beliefs in the Hindu gods, and he accepted the theory of transmigration and the doctrine of *karma*, which is laid down in the *Upanishads*. But he denied the existence of the soul and taught that *karma* operated from one birth to the next without this connecting link. Nor was there anything about a Supreme Deity in Buddha's doctrine.

He concentrated upon a rule of life, not only for his religious orders but for the laymen to follow. He taught the Four Great Truths: That human existence is pain, and desire the cause of it, that release from pain is won by victory over desire, and that this is achieved by following the Eight-fold Path. He was not a social reformer. He did not preach against caste; it was simply ignored in the reception of converts, while his doctrine was taught by those who had renounced the world as nothing worth.

The new religion of "right conduct" to end suffering spread rapidly, and within a few years he founded the Sangha, his religious

brotherhood of begging monks. This was soon followed by the order of nuns with its eight rules of obedience to the brethren.

Buddha spent the rest of his life wandering through Magadha and Kosala, and among his Sakiya kinsmen, preaching his doctrine in the simple language of the people, and died at Kusinagara, near the Nepalese border, about the year 483 B.C.

For several hundred years the Buddhist religion remained unchanged, holding what is called the Hinayana doctrine, the Lesser Vehicle of Salvation. But soon after the beginning of the Christian era Buddha became an object of worship and prayer, and Buddhism began to evolve its future Buddhas (Bhodisattvas), and their Shaktis (female energies). The earliest figures of the Buddha are those from the ancient province of Gandhara, dating from about A.D. 100. This theological development is known as the Mahayana, or the Greater Vehicle, and is the Buddhism of Ceylon and Burma, of Nepal and Tibet; but it proved quite unable to hold its own with Brahmanical Hinduism.

The Buddha's personal teaching is held to be contained in the *Tripitaka* (The Three Baskets). It is preserved in Pali, which is the Buddhist priestly language of Ceylon, Siam and Burma, and in the form of Sanskrit in Nepal from which are derived the translations used from Mongolia to Japan. Buddhism only gradually adopted Sanskrit, but after the sixth century A.D., it was used exclusively.

The *Jatakas*, or birth stories of Buddha, are famous in Buddhist art as well as literature, and a collection of stories under that name is known to have existed in 380 B.C.<sup>1</sup> The gateways of the great *stupa* at Sanchi are decorated with bas reliefs illustrating these legends and fables; while the earliest surviving representations of Hindu idols are to be found in Buddhist sculpture, such as the goddess Sri of the Barhut *stupa*, of the second century B.C.

Unlike its less enterprising rival Jainism (which still exists in the country), Buddhism played a prominent part in early Indian history. Then Brahmanism and the strength of the caste system, which Gautama ignored, began to absorb it; and Buddhism was finally swept out from the land of its birth by the Muhammadan invasion of

<sup>1</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 369.

India. All that survive today are the relics of its sculpture, its rock-hewn caves, remains of its monasteries and, most celebrated of all, its *stupas*. These are domes of solid brick or stone, guarding a relic chamber in the heart of the monument, and protected by massive stone copies of wooden post and rail fences. The *stupas* vary from miniature votive models to the largest, at Anuradhapura, which exceeds in size all but the two greatest of the Egyptian pyramids.<sup>1</sup> *Stupas* were also built by the Jains, and these were identical in form with the monuments of the rival religion.<sup>2</sup>

Yet Buddhism has left Europe for ever in its debt. The Buddhist niche of the fourth century B.C., was adopted by Persia, where it became the pointed arch, and so was handed on, with the Persian ribbed vaulting and buttresses, to give birth to the Gothic architecture of western cathedrals.

At the time when Jainism and Buddhism were beginning to make headway in the country of the Ganges, a foreign power, of the same original stock as the Indo-Aryans, had established itself on the banks of the Indus. Cyrus, King of Persia, had led his armies into what are now Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and Darius I, about the year 518 B.C., annexed Gandhara (the modern Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts), and the lower Indus Valley, to form the twentieth and richest satrapy of the Persian Empire. The tribute paid by the Indian satrapy into the Persian treasury was 360 talents of gold dust,<sup>3</sup> equivalent to over a million pounds sterling. It represented about one third of the total tribute paid by the Asiatic provinces.

About a year later Darius sent a naval expedition under Scylax, a Greek sea captain, down the Indus, from its junction with the Kabul River to the sea. From there the fleet made its way to Egypt, reaching Arsinoë (Suez), two and a half years after it had begun its voyage. Scylax afterwards wrote a book of travel in India, now regrettably lost, in which there figured people who used their enormous feet as

<sup>1</sup> *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, N. Coomaraswamy.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, V. A. Smith, revised K. de B. Codrington (Oxford, 1930). See Ch. III. for architecture of this period.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, III. 94.

sunshades, and others who wrapped their ears round them as blankets while they slept. Quotations from it are made by other early Greek writers such as Herodotus and Ktesias.<sup>1</sup> Ktesias was a Greek doctor attached to the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon, King of Persia from 415–397 B.C., which gave him the opportunity of meeting travellers from India. Only fragments of what he wrote have been preserved, but his *Indika* gave the Greeks the ideas they held about the mysterious land in the East. Unfortunately his imagination knew no bounds.

Persian influence does not appear to have penetrated further into India, but the satrapy was held until its conquest by Alexander the Great. A contingent of Indian troops composed of chariots and mounted and dismounted archers, went with Xerxes when he invaded Greece; and at Arbela, when Darius III made his last stand against Alexander, the Persian army included Indian troops with a detachment of elephants.

The period from about 600–200 B.C., marks the beginning of definite Indian history. In literature, it is the era of the *Sutras* codifying the sacred and legal knowledge upon which the later law-books are based; and towards its close the Indian epics first took shape from the songs of the ancient bards. The Sutra style of classic literature lasted for a thousand years, and may be said still to survive in commentaries of Indian jurists on older works.

The *Sutras* are the third and last stage of Vedic literature. They consist of:

- (i) Ritual: The *Crauta Sutras*, based on revelation (*śruti*); with the *Grihya Sutras*, dealing with household rites, attached to them.
- (ii) Legal: The *Dharma Sutras*, which are the oldest sources of Indian law and take, as their name implies, a religious stand-point.
- (iii) Subsidiary literature in the shape of grammar and religious commentaries.

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient India as described by Ktesias*, McCrindle, p. 60.



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India has its parallel to the Iliad of Homer in two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These in vernacular translations and popular editions, are what no other Sanskrit literature has ever been : a household store throughout Hindu India, to be recited publicly and privately all over the country. For the men and women in these epics, apart from their romantic adventures and the fights of warring nations, lived much the same lives as Hindus do today, although of course there are obvious exceptions. The free choice of a husband which a girl then exercised is one. Another is the marriage of Draupadi in the *Mahabharata* to five brothers at once—a shocking form of incest to more modern Hinduism, but still a custom in countries like Tibet. Lastly, when the epics reached their final form, cow killing and the horse sacrifice were things of the past.

More than this, as Vincent Smith has pointed out, the *Ramayana* has been edited by the Brahmans into a religious book consecrated to the service of the Deity in the form of Vishnu. Rama, the incarnation of the Deity, has become the man-god and saviour of mankind in the eyes of millions of devout worshippers, who have his name in the ejaculation “ Ram, Ram ” continually on their lips. He is venerated as the ideal man, while his wife Sita is revered as the model of womanhood.<sup>1</sup>

Hindus divide epic poetry into *itihasi* and *purana* (tales and legends), and *kavya* (poems). The *Mahabharata* is the best and oldest example of *itihasi* and *purana*, though there are poems in it as well, while the *Ramayana* is in polished verse.

The *Ramayana*, with the exception of the first and last books (possibly added about the second century B.C., and later), is the work of one author, the hermit Valmiki, who lived in the kingdom of Kosala perhaps before the time of Buddha.

It tells, in seven books running into 48,000 lines, the story of Rama, son of the King of Ayodya. Rama and his wife Sita were driven by intrigue from the court, to meet with many adventures amongst giants and demons. In the end Rama and Sita came home safely to reign in triumph.

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History of India*, V. A. Smith, pp. 27, 28.

Unlike the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* is the work of many authors. In its present form with its legends and disquisitions on law, philosophy, religion and the duties of the military caste, it consists of about 200,000 lines, and is the creation of centuries. It was probably built up from much older legends between about the fourth century B.C. and the third or fourth century A.D., and gives the first clear and more or less consistent account of Hindu political thought.

The main story of the *Mahabharata*, like the *Iliad*, is founded on the traditions of a great war, into which the feud between the Kurus and the Pandus is held to have dragged every nation in India. The decisive eighteen days' battle was fought near what is now Delhi, and both sides were almost annihilated. The war may be taken as an actual event, fought in the country of Kurukshetra "the field of the Kurus," the centre from which Indo-Aryan culture eventually spread. Hindu tradition gives 3102 B.C. as the date of the war, but Professor Rapson calculates that it was fought sometime about 1000 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

In an early scene the Pandu king is challenged to play against the most expert dicer at the Kuru court, and stakes in succession his treasure, his army, his kingdom, his four brothers and then his wife, Draupadi (to whom they were equally married), only to lose them all. His final throw sends him into banishment with his family for twelve years. When his time of exile is over the Pandu king returns and begins the war of retribution which ends in the total destruction of the Kurus.<sup>2</sup>

One of the oldest and most popular tales in the *Mahabharata* is the story of Nala and the beautiful princess Damayanti whom he for long deserted. Dice again play their part, but in this case it is to bring about a happy ending.

The kingdom of Magadha comes definitely into history with the fifth king of its Sisunaga dynasty, Bimbisara. The line had been founded by a warrior chief who made Giribaja his capital, and when

<sup>1</sup> *Camb Hist India*, Vol. I. Ch. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> For fuller details of the Epics see Macdonell's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, and the lively account of the gambling scene, in which the old men looking on play the part of the chorus, given in *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. Ch. XI.

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Bimbisara ascended the throne in 543 B.C., at the age of fifteen, his dominions were about one-seventh the size of Kosala, which was at that time the chief power in Northern India, as head of a confederation of clans and republics.

Bimbisara, the friend of Buddha, although himself a convert to Jainism, was a progressive ruler. He built a new and larger capital at Rajagriha, and by conquering the neighbouring State of Anga took the first step towards the future greatness of the kingdom.

Ajatasatru, his son and successor, who lies under the suspicion of having murdered his own father, added Kasi, Kosala and Videha to his dominions, and built the fortress which eventually developed into the famous capital of Pataliputra, on which site Patna now stands.

Nothing survives but the names of the Kshatriya kings of the Sisunaga House who followed him. The last of the line married a Sudra woman and founded the Sudra dynasty of the Nine Nandas, of whom very little is known. One of them, believed to have been a Jainist called Dhanananda, was on the throne in 326 B.C., when the Macedonian army refused to cross the Beas and Alexander turned back towards the Indus.

Until he became involved in a plot against the throne and had to fly for his life, the commander-in-chief of the Magadha army in the reign of Dhanananda was a young man called Chandragupta, the founder of the first Empire of India.

## CHRONOLOGY

B.C.

- 1200-1000. Earliest hymns of *Rigveda* (Chhandas period).  
Kuru-Pandu War (*vide Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. p. 307).  
The date by Indian tradition is 3102 B.C.
- 1000-800. Later hymns of *Rigveda*, and three later Vedas (Mantra period).
- 800. Death of Parsva, precursor of Mahavira.
- 600-200. Sutra period.
- 563-483. Siddhartha Gautama, founder of Buddhism.
- 558-530. Cyrus, King of Persia; conquered Gandhara.
- 543-491. Bimbisara, King of Magadha.
- 540-468. Vardhamana Mahavira, founder of Jainism.

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- 521-485. Darius I, King of Persia.  
518. Conquest by Darius of Indus Valley.  
517. Naval expedition of Scylax.  
491-459. Ajatasatru, King of Magadha.  
413-321. Mahapadma to Dhanananda.

With the exception of the dates of the reigns of Cyrus and Darius I (which are historical) and the dates of Buddha, Mahavira and the Persian military operations (all of which are approximate) the dates in the above table are conjectural. The discrepancies in the accounts of the Nandas in Jain and Buddhist records and in the *Puranas* are so hopeless that anything approaching definite history is impossible. Purely Indian history first becomes accurately dated by the identification of Chandragupta (Maurya) with Sandracottus of the Greeks.

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## CHAPTER II

### The Maurya Empire

IN the winter months of 327 B.C., Alexander secured his line of communications through Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> His army of 30,000 men had as many nations in its ranks as the *Grande Armée* of Napoleon, enlisted from countries as far apart as Thrace and the Hindu Kush, with the stout Macedonian phalanx and the magnificent Greek cavalry as its backbone.

He had overthrown the great Aryan Empire of Persia, and in the spring of 326 B.C. he began his campaign in a country made up of rival kingdoms and a number of smaller states fighting to keep their independence.

As soon as Alexander crossed the Indus, Ambhi, King of Taxila, at that time the chief seat of Brahmanical learning, sent him a present of elephants, silver, and droves of sheep and oxen, inviting him to his capital as its overlord. Ambhi was threatened by the Purus and he saw that the invincible Yavana<sup>2</sup> army, far from meaning his own destruction, could be turned to account against his aggressive neighbours.

From Taxila Alexander advanced to attack the Purus, who were preparing to defend the line of the River Hydaspes (Jhelum) under their king, whom the Greeks called Poros; and Ambhi, when he sent 5000 of his troops to fight their fellow countrymen, indicates how foreign nationalities in the centuries to come were enabled to rise to power in India.

<sup>1</sup> For Alexander's route see Robinson's *Ephemerides*. Also see *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, McCrindle.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. Ionian, the name given to the Greeks in Indian literature and inscriptions from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D., e.g. Greek terms in astronomy and references to Greek girls sent as attendants on Indian princes.

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In the engagement which took place at Jalalpur<sup>1</sup> on the banks of the Jhelum, Alexander's tactics in that most difficult operation, crossing a river in the face of strong opposition, were crowned with success. In the battle which followed, the army of Poros occupied a four-mile frontage, with 200 elephants in the centre and 300 chariots on the wings forming the first line, and 30,000 infantry in support, with 4000 cavalry on their flanks. The Macedonian phalanx withstood the charge of the Indian elephants, Alexander's cavalry outflanked their enemy's line and Poros was completely defeated. But his dignity and courage so impressed his conqueror that Alexander with wise magnanimity gave Poros back his kingdom, to be held under Greek suzerainty.

Partly by fighting, aided by his Indian allies, and partly by diplomacy, Alexander advanced to the Hyphasis (Beas). But he was not destined to measure himself against the powerful kingdom of Magadha, beyond the Sutlej, on that great plain, the historical focus of all India, upon which a succession of Delhis have stood and where the fate of India has so often been decided. His Macedonians refused to go a step farther, and Alexander turned back. He reached his newly founded city of Bucephala,<sup>2</sup> planned with Nicæa to form Greek colonies on the fringe of his Empire, and sailed away down river to the coast of the Persian Gulf, in the year 325 B.C. Nearchus, the commander of the fleet, subsequently wrote an account of the Indian expedition, which is largely quoted by Arrian. Twenty Greek chroniclers wrote histories of the campaign, but all these are lost, except for quotations in the works of later writers.<sup>3</sup>

Within two years Alexander lay dead in Babylon, and six years later the short-lived European rule of his satraps had disappeared. All that remained was the definite contact between India and Europe made by the Greek kingdoms established in Western Asia after the disruption of Alexander's Empire. European intrusion in India was at an end until Vasco da Gama crossed the Arabian Sea and set up his marble pillar at Calicut in 1498.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Sir Aurel Stein, *The Times*, London, 15th April 1932, but compare *Early History of India*, V. A. Smith, pp. 71-78.

<sup>2</sup> Named after Alexander's charger Bucephalus, which was buried there. The site of the city is probably Jalalpur.

<sup>3</sup> *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, McCrindle.

### Alexander's Route--→--→



Age Group	Percentage
18-24	10%
25-34	20%
35-44	25%
45-54	20%
55-64	15%
65-74	10%
75-84	5%
85+	5%

Longitude East 80 of Greenwich

**Stanford's Greg Eklund**





## THE MAURYA EMPIRE

Shortly after Alexander's withdrawal from India, Chandragupta, with the help of his able adviser, the Brahman Chanakya (Kautalya), seized the throne of Magadha and became the first of the Maurya dynasty to reign at Pataliputra. He may have belonged to the house of Nanda but he made certain of the kingdom by killing Dhanananda and his entire family. He then ruthlessly pursued his ambition to extend his suzerainty over the whole of India north of the Narbada. State after State became feudatory to him until his own dominions were threatened in their turn by invasion.

Seleucus Nicator, satrap of Babylon, King of Syria and conqueror of Bactria, in the middle of his turbulent career  
*Seleucus Nicator.* crossed the Indus, about the year 305 B.C., to conquer Hindustan. Chandragupta advanced to meet him, and it is stated<sup>1</sup> that he could take the field with 9000 war-elephants, great strength in chariots, 30,000 cavalry and 600,000 infantry. There is no record of what followed. But by the terms of peace between the two kings, Seleucus Nicator, in return for 500 elephants, ceded territory to Chandragupta, the Sandracottus of the Greeks, which carried the frontiers of the Indian king to the Hindu Kush in the north and westward to the highlands above Herat.

In India itself the western provinces (now Sind, Kathiawar, Gujerat and Malwa) fell under the overlordship of Pataliputra, and the first Empire of India, the dominion of the Maurya kings of Magadha, was established. These provinces were probably absorbed during the reign of Chandragupta; they were certainly in the possession of his grandson Asoka. Seleucus treated Chandragupta on terms of equality and sent an ambassador to the court of Pataliputra. The ambassador was Megasthenes to whom we are indebted for the wonderfully vivid picture of India two thousand two hundred years ago. His own writings are lost, but they are quoted at some length by Arrian (a Greek official of the Roman Empire of the second century A.D.) and by other writers.<sup>2</sup>

Pataliputra was a wooden city built on the tongue of land at the

<sup>1</sup> By Pliny. See *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, McCrindle.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient India, Megasthenes and Arrian*, McCrindle.

junction of the Sōn with the Ganges, and forming an oblong of about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles by  $1\frac{3}{4}$ . It was defended by a continuous stockade work of heavy timber, with 570 towers and pierced by 64 portcullised gates. Beyond the walls ran a deep moat about 200 yards wide, filled from the River Sōn. The palace, which Megasthenes considered as magnificent as the royal residences of Susa and Ecbatana, stood in a beautiful park, where there were fish-ponds, peacocks and pheasants. The king is recorded to have lived in a state of barbaric splendour in his timber-built palace with its gilded pillars, being served at his table with golden dishes six feet across. When he appeared in public it was either in a palanquin of gold or mounted on an elephant.

The king had his crown lands which were partly cultivated by slaves, but the bulk of the revenue on which the royal state was maintained came from the taxation of the agricultural class, a form of taxation which has always been the foundation-stone of Indian finance. All land ultimately belonged to the king and he was paid a land tax by the holders, who also gave him one-fourth of the produce of the soil, a payment that was made partly in kind and partly in labour.

When Megasthenes represented Seleucus at the court of Pataliputra, the government comprised a very large number of officials, magistrates, local governors and royal advisers. It is not possible to determine how far the organization about to be described had been evolved by the Nanda kings; but they undoubtedly possessed a very powerful army to support their authority.

In the Maurya Empire, and indeed throughout Indian history, agriculture has remained the outstanding industry of the country; and the practical unit of administration was naturally the village, under its headman (*gramam*), then an official nominee. The headman dealt with the revenue and supervised the farming, having as his advisers the village council of elders (*panchayat*). The policy of the Maurya government was to provide for the even distribution of the agrarian population by systematic plantation of villages in thinly occupied tracts. For the general improvement of agriculture officials were appointed by the government to "superintend the rivers, measure the land, as is done in Egypt, and inspect the sluices by

## THE MAURYA EMPIRE

which water is let out from the main canals into their branches so that everyone may have an equal supply of it.”<sup>1</sup> The government water-rate was, however, a heavy burden, varying from one-third to one-fifth of the produce of the land.<sup>2</sup>

Groups of under a dozen villages were under the control of a *gopa*, above whom were placed higher officials, and in the reign of Asoka we find *rajukas* responsible for hundreds of thousands of people.

The district officials, who formed the first of the three categories of government servants mentioned by Megasthenes, were responsible for irrigation and land measurement, hunting, agriculture, woods and forests, metal-foundries and mines, roads and the distance stones maintained on them.

Chandragupta organized the management of his capital in six boards of five persons each, and these town officials formed the second category of government servants. The respective functions of the boards were:

- (1) Supervision of factories.
- (2) Care of foreigners (control of the inns, charge of the sick and burial of the dead).
- (3) Births and deaths, for purpose of taxation and record.
- (4) Trade and commerce, supervising weights and measures and generally controlling the markets.
- (5) Inspection of manufactured articles and provision of distinction between new and second-hand goods.
- (6) Collection of the 10 per cent. tax on sales.

The six municipal boards formed a general council to superintend temples, public works, harbours and prices, and in both town and country there were officials who kept complete registers both of property and the population.<sup>3</sup> The superintendent of passports issued these on payment for the use of all persons entering or leaving the country.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strabo quoting Megasthenes (see pp. 86–89 *ibid.*).

<sup>2</sup> *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, Book II. Ch. XXIV. (p. 140 of the translation by Shamasastry).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II. Ch. XXXVI. p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II. Ch. XXXIV. pp. 171, 172.

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The organization of the government machine was wonderful, but no scale of punishments could check the corruption which was rife in its offices. Kautalya observes "just as with fish moving under water it cannot possibly be discerned whether they are drinking water or not, so it is impossible to detect government servants employed on official duties when helping themselves to money." He believed that about forty methods of embezzlement had been elaborated.<sup>1</sup>

The third category of officials constituted the War Office. This department also consisted of six boards of five, each being provided with a large secretariat:

*Military  
Administration.*

- |                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Admiralty. | (2) Quartermaster-General. |
| (3) Infantry.  | (4) Cavalry.               |
| (5) Chariots.  | (6) Elephants.             |

The forces of the Empire were made up of hereditary troops, representing the old Kshatriya division of society; feudatories who possibly included others besides the warrior caste; guild levies who may have been a kind of corps of armed commissionaires; and forest tribes, who appear to have been used for minor expeditions.<sup>2</sup> The four arms of the service were elephants, four-horsed chariots, cavalry and infantry. The equipment of an army included fixed and mobile engines of war, such as "hundred slayers." The use of advanced guards and reserves was known; and the deployment of an army for battle can be studied in the dispositions made by Poros when he engaged Alexander on the Jhelum. Fighting was no longer a confused mêlée of armed rabbles; organized formations had taken their place. The art of war was systematically studied, and it may be noted that wounded prisoners were supposed to be spared. In addition to chapters on military engineering and organization, five books of the *Arthashastra* lay down the principles of war with the detail of a field service manual.

The royal capital was scientifically defended, and was provided with salients, covered ways and a wide street round the inner side of

<sup>1</sup> *Arthas.*, Book II. Ch. IX. pp. 77 and 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. p. 489.

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the city wall. The frontiers were guarded by forts, and strongholds were built at other strategic points.

The principal Ministers of State included the Treasurer, the Minister of Works (whose responsibilities ranged from the maintenance of public buildings to the rain gauge); the head of the Judiciary; the Minister of Correspondence, who issued the royal decrees; the Court Chamberlain; and the Commander of the Body-guard.

*The Central Government.*

Over and above the government offices was the king's Inner Cabinet of four; his *Diwan* (chief Minister), his *Purohita* (religious adviser), the *Senapati* (Commander-in-Chief) and the *Yuvaraja* (heir apparent).<sup>1</sup>

Election of a king had by this time entirely disappeared, and primogeniture had not been evolved. The reigning sovereign chose his heir from among his sons, with the concurrence of his people. A most rigorous intellectual and moral training was prescribed for the selected prince.

A number of the chief offices of State were hereditary and, with the exception of the *purohita*, who of course had to be a Brahman, the natural course would have been to select these high officials from the superior castes. But the Nanda line of kings and the Maurya emperors of low extraction who followed them created a standpoint which would have been unthinkable in earlier times. Birth remained a strong qualification, but ability was now held to override it; and the rise of a low-born man to power is not rare in the history of India.

Indian conquerors whether foreign, or of the country itself, have not for the most part, from Alexander's local and short-lived dominion onwards, actually displaced the rulers they subdued. In Chandragupta's time the principles of the central government were, doubtless, loosely imposed upon the tribal system which still survived in the Punjab, but the king's writ ran, and was obeyed, to the farthest limits of his empire; an empire made up of a confederation of States. The independent feudalism and oligarchy of a number of rival States had been replaced by the highly organized bureaucracy of one

<sup>1</sup> *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, B. Prasad, p. 124.

paramount government, supported by a huge standing army and buttressed by swarms of secret agents and informers of both sexes, whose counterpart can best be found in the police of modern Russia.

Over this structure of administration was the King; and Kautalya's enunciation<sup>1</sup> of the general principles of foreign policy, and the daily time-table of the sovereign make the counsels of Machiavelli on statecraft and of Stockmar on royal duties appear almost feeble.

*The King.*

In the *Arthashastra* the benefit of the State knows no law, and justifies any means to ensure it. Foreign policy as regards neighbouring powers is summed up in the "four expedients" of war, conciliation, bribery or dissension, all of which gave full play to the highest refinements of treachery, propaganda and diplomatic manoeuvre.

The royal day was divided into periods which allowed four and a half hours to sleep, three to baths, meals and private study, one and a half hours to religious exercises and an optional hour and a half for recreation. Thirteen and a half hours were to be devoted to affairs of State, from his *purohita's* greeting before dawn, the reports of the secret agents at nightfall, up to the last audience of ascetics and physicians, in the chamber of the sacred fire.<sup>2</sup> In the great palace, with its secret passages and staircases and hollow pillars, and the walled quarters of the queens and concubines, every fantastic precaution was taken for the king's safety; and when he retired for sleep to the strains of music, his room was continually changed for fear of assassination.<sup>3</sup>

How far Chandragupta adhered to the rule of life laid down by his mentor is not known. But Megasthenes records that the king used to hear the causes of his subjects during his daily massage,

<sup>1</sup> In the *Arthashastra* (Manual of Politics) already quoted which is attributed to the Maurya statesman Chanakya (Kautalya) and so dated about 300 B.C. But even if the accepted traditional date is too early the *Arthashastra* is a clear statement of the Hindu theory of government of that time, and it had the strongest influence on the thoughts and ideas of future generations. (*Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. Ch. XIX. and *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, B. Prasad, Ch. V)

<sup>2</sup> Kautalya's *Arthashastra*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ancient India, Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 70.

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an illustration of the personal touch which has always characterized Indian rulers.

In the administration of justice moderation and fairness were recognized in theory, but in practice were heavily discounted by caste favouritism. For instance, a Sudra lost the limb with which he assaulted a Brahman, but the reverse did not hold good. If a warrior defamed a priest he was fined 150 *panas*, but if a priest defamed a warrior the fine was 50 *panas*, or if he defamed a slave only 12.

The basis on which the laws were founded were sacred precept (*dharma*), agreement, the custom of villages, guilds and families, and royal edicts.

Civil law dealt with marriage and dowry, inheritance, housing, trespass, debt, slaves, labour, contracts, and sales. Divorce was permitted with the consent of both parties and widows could remarry.

The penal code was very severe and apparently effective, for Megasthenes is quoted by Strabo<sup>1</sup> as noting that with 400,000 men in the camp of Sandracottus the thefts reported on any one day did not exceed the value of 200 drachmæ. In addition to the more obvious charges, the penal code included adultery, defamation, coining, serious violation of caste rules, boycott and other acts of employees, combinations to affect prices and fraud in connexion with weights and measures, together with political offences and misconduct of officials.

Cases might be tried by local assemblies, by judges in the towns and, if necessary, on appeal through the higher courts by the king himself. Three Brahmans were attached to the benches of three judges to explain the sacred law. Witnesses took the oath before Brahmans, vessels of water or fire, and underwent close cross-examination. They were given travelling allowances which were paid by the losing party in a civil suit, but on the other hand they were fined if they committed perjury. In a criminal case the accused, if not a Brahman, could be tortured to obtain a confession.

Except for treason, when the invariable punishment was death,

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient India, Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 68.

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sentences were adjusted, as has already been noticed, according to the status of the offender and of his victim. These awards ranged in severity from fines to death by impalement, but instead of imposing a death sentence on a Brahman he was outcasted or sent to the mines for life. The law, however, gave some protection to the weak. The honour of women was carefully guarded from the point of view of motherhood; and the abduction, hurt or outrage of a prostitute, her mother, daughter or maidservant was severely punished. But it must be remembered that prostitution was under State supervision; and the fees and expenditure of the women were checked by a superintendent who levied on their income a tax of one-fifteenth. In one instance<sup>1</sup> the rule of increased fines was reversed for, where a common man would be fined the equivalent to a penny, the king (who should know better) would be fined a thousand.

Trial by ordeal, which in earlier days had been only by fire or water, was now developing into nine forms to suit various accusations. Another method of invoking justice, usually to recover a debt, is known to this day as *dharna*. The injured person sits on the doorstep of his opponent and fasts until he dies, or the offender yields.

The capital city of Pataliputra was organized in four districts subdivided into wards and controlled by regulations ranging in scope from precautions against fire to the official report on lost property.

Crafts had greatly developed, especially those dealing with precious metals and textiles. In the big trading communities, clubs and guilds, in some ways not unlike the London city companies, had been established and the wealthy merchants at their head were given official recognition.

There was a volume of internal and external trade, controlled, as to distribution and regulation of prices, by the Superintendent of Commerce. Imports were encouraged by favourable tariffs, but all goods, whether they were skins from Central Asia or muslins

<sup>1</sup> Laws of Manu, see *Institutes of Manu* (edited by G. C. Haughton, London, 1825), Vol. II. (translated by Sir W. Jones), Ch. VIII. 336.



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from China, were subject to duties at the frontier and octroi dues at the city gates. Customs duties (export and import) varied from one twenty-fifth to one-fifth of the value of the goods. Articles for religious use were admitted free. Country produce also paid octroi on the way to market, and to prevent evasion of the dues, purchases from local farms were forbidden. Smuggling was dealt with as it is in modern civilized countries.

The king was himself a commercial magnate warned, however, in the *Arthashastra*, not to profiteer. His warehouses throughout the country were filled with the output of his factories, workshops and prisons, and the produce of his personal domains, forests and mines. The higher classes in the State, unlike the feudal landholding nobility of the west, had a recognized official status; the revenue of an estate, or even of a town, being assigned to them for their maintenance.

In addition to the various sources of revenue already mentioned, the king, when badly in need of money, was entitled to levy benevolences with the active help of informers from all except Brahmans and subjects employed on special service to the State, such as colonization and road construction. Kautilya mentions that those who freely or to do good offered their wealth to the king, should be given a rank at court, or some other honour, an early example of the purchase of a title.

Taxation, under the Maurya emperors, was exceedingly heavy and ingeniously comprehensive, but the cost of Chandragupta's elaborate system of government was enormous, and he maintained a huge army which had successfully defended the country from a formidable foreign invader. Benevolences were not unknown at one time in England, and comparing the financial methods of the Hindus and later the Mogul emperors with modern taxation, it must be remembered that no such expedients as a national debt or long-term Government loans were open to them.

Coining was a State monopoly, and the Royal Mint turned out the small curved punch-marked ingots of silver and copper which represent the earliest strictly Indian currency. In the north-west an Indian ruler, Saubhuti, who had

made friends with Alexander, issued a silver coinage with a Greek legend. Saubhuti (Sóphytes) is definitely identified with the Sopeithes of Arrian and Strabo. All the other coins up to this period which have been found in India were apparently brought in from Central Asia. Gold coins were not minted in India until the first century B.C.

With the rise of the Maurya Empire came the growth of luxuries, chiefly in dress; and stone and brick were beginning to displace wood as building materials. But the real test of the civilization of a people is the position of its women.

Both the regular and irregular recognized forms of marriage could be dissolved by mutual consent or, automatically, by prolonged desertion. A wife owned private property in the shape of her dowry and ornaments, and this was to some extent at her own disposal on widowhood. The custom of *suttee* was recognized, but until a later date seems to have been confined to royalty. Ill-usage by either husband or wife was punishable, and offences against women were dealt with severely. The time was still to come when foreign invasion was to force Hindu society in self-defence to follow the custom of *pardah*.

Caste had now greatly developed. Megasthenes, in his references to the inhabitants of the country, is misleading on the subject, but the seven categories he describes undoubtedly classify the occupations of the people he saw around him. Kautilya, on the other hand, classifies the nation in the four original castes, although at this date there must have been a considerable number of sub-castes. The ambassador stated that the second caste, the husbandmen, were by far the most numerous and added that, "being exempt from fighting they devote the whole of their time to tillage; nor would an enemy coming upon a husbandman at work on his land do him any harm."<sup>1</sup> The fifth caste, according to Megasthenes, "is the military. It is well organized and equipped for war and holds the second place in point of numbers. The entire force are maintained at the king's expense."<sup>2</sup> An Indian military establishment then consisted of four arms, and the forces of Magadha were

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient India, Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

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reported to Alexander to reach a total of 3000-4000 elephants, 2000 chariots, 20,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry.

Village life, apart from the exactions of the tax collectors, was quiet and happy. Inns, eating-houses and licensed gaming establishments (where the State took 5 per cent. of all winnings) were common, and travelling companies of actors, singers and dancers gave performances in the village hall, a form of entertainment deprecated by the author of the *Arthashastra* as being too great a distraction from the fireside and work in the fields.

The staple food of the villagers, except in the north-west, was rice. Vegetarianism had not yet been established and Brahmans are said to have been accustomed to eat meat, excepting apparently that of horned cattle.<sup>1</sup> The popular drink was rice beer, and the people were abstemious except on holiday, when heavy drinking and much eating characterized the festival.

Light is thrown upon the subject of the royal table by the first of Asoka's rock edicts. The emperor forbade the slaughter of animals for sacrifice as being against his principles. He went on to say "formerly in the kitchen of King Priyadarsin, beloved of the gods, many hundreds of thousands of animals were every day slaughtered to make curry. But now . . . only three lives have been killed for curry, namely two peacocks and one deer, but even that deer not regularly. Even these three animals shall not be afterwards killed."<sup>2</sup>

The king riding on an elephant and surrounded by women, some of them holding the royal umbrella, fan and golden pitcher and some of them armed, went in state to hunt in the royal preserves. Men with drums and gongs headed the procession with its escort of spearmen, while the road was kept clear with ropes, which it was death to cross. Another royal amusement was a gladiatorial show, and the animal fights which still survive in some of the Indian States.

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History of India*, p. 70, where V. A. Smith quotes Quintus Curtius (c. first century A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> *Asoka*, Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, p. 297. Priyadarsin literally means "one of amiable look," and this is how he almost invariably describes himself in his edicts. Asoka always calls himself Raja, the terms Maharaja and Rajadhiraja not having as yet come into use.

The three faiths, Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism lived side by side. Brahmanism represented the established order, and the two great popular deities were Siva and Vishnu under the form of Krishna. But the age had grown tired of elaborate ritual, and Buddhism was challenging Brahmanism. The Brahman was no longer primarily an officiating priest, although the king's private chaplain was one of the principal officers of State. The priest's most obvious function had become that of the professor, and his dwelling the forest hermitage. But in person he was sacred and exempt from taxation, confiscation and torture.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the *Arthasastra* no Indian literature can be definitely associated with the reigns of Chandragupta and his son Bindusara.

Jainist tradition affirms that Chandragupta abdicated and became a Jain after he had overrun all India north of the Narbada. He was followed by his son Bindusara, who succeeded in holding the newly won territories, but little else is known about him. He wrote to Antiochus I wishing to buy sweet wine, figs and a sophist to teach him to argue, to be told that sophists were not in the market; and he sent his son Asoka to quell a rebellion at Taxila. The only other recorded event is the presence of an ambassador named Deimachos at his court, sent by the King of Syria.

Bindusara died about 274 B.C., and the empire passed to one of his hundred sons, Asoka Vardhana. The system of government which Asoka inherited has already been described, and for some years the new emperor lived the life of a normal Hindu king, feasting and hunting to lighten the burden of State affairs. Then came a change as dramatic and far-reaching in its consequences as the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus.

Asoka, to enlarge his empire towards the south, made war upon the Dravidian kingdom of the Kalingas, and conquered it. But a campaign in which "one hundred and fifty thousand were there slain and many times

<sup>1</sup> *Arthas.*, Book IV. Ch. VIII. p. 270.

as many died,"<sup>1</sup> filled him with a horror and remorse which changed his entire outlook on life, and had a lasting effect upon the world-history of the great religion to which he turned in his distress.

The Kalinga War was fought in about 262 B.C., and Asoka's conversion to Buddhism immediately followed. Two and a half years later, after his novitiate as a lay disciple, he entered the *sangha*, and in his religious habit made what he has himself described as a strenuous tour of the country.

His position as a Buddhist monk whose vocation was in the outside world is paralleled in Christendom by two western kings in the thirteenth century A.D., Saint Louis of France and Saint Ferdinand of Castile, the liberator of Spain from the Saracens, who both were members of the Third Order of St. Francis. While as regards the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority in India, Hindu society, as Dr. Beni Prasad has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> included in itself what were Church and State in the West, and the clash between the religious and secular powers in medieval Europe had no counterpart in Ancient India.

The Brahman priest, by the time of Chandragupta, no longer exerted his old influence in a State which had evolved a huge civil secretariat. But Asoka impregnated his government with the spirit of Buddhism.

He had abolished the royal hunt and transformed the gay progresses of his predecessors into religious tours; and in the fourteenth year of his reign Asoka impressed upon his administrative officers the duty of inculcating religion and morality in addition to their normal work. A year later he appointed high officials whose sole business it was to teach the law of piety to his subjects of both sexes irrespective of their creed, from the inmates of the palace downwards, these officials being also instructed to redress wrongs and organize charitable endowments.

<sup>1</sup> Rock Edict, XIII., *Asoka*, Bhandarkar, pp. 329-334.

<sup>2</sup> *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, B. Prasad, pp. 8, 9.

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Buddhism, which had pursued its quiet way since the death of its founder three hundred years earlier, was galvanized into a church militant by the marching orders it received from the emperor. Not content with seeing the faith preached throughout the Empire of India, Asoka developed a most effective organization for foreign missions. About the time of the third Buddhist Council, which was held at Pataliputra about 253 B.C. and lasted nine months, missionaries were sent far and wide: to Kashmir where Srinagar was founded, and to the ranges of the Himalaya; to Ceylon, where it is said Asoka's son the monk Mahendra and his daughter the nun Sanghamitra converted the people of the island; and as far afield as the dominions of Antiochus Theos King of Syria and Western Asia, Ptolemy Philadelphos King of Egypt, Magas King of Cyrene in North Africa, Antigonos Gonatas King of Macedonia and Alexander King of Epirus,<sup>1</sup> a record of astounding enterprise.

Darius left behind him the cuneiform inscriptions which blazon the triumphs of the Persian arms as far east as the Western Punjab and Sind. Asoka proclaimed the greatest conquest to be the conquest of duty, and that his wish for all animate beings was security, self-control, peace of mind and happiness. His devotion to religion and morality are recorded on granite rocks and sandstone pillars from the Yusafzai country in the north to Siddapura in the south, and from Kathiawar in the west to Cuttack on the Orissa coast. The might of Persia crumbled into dust before the Macedonian phalanx and the military genius of Alexander, but today the Buddhism of Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia, of China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Tibet, is the harvest of the seed sown by the Emperor Asoka.

At the same time, in the spirit of the more enlightened rulers of India, Asoka showed complete tolerance for other faiths. As he said himself, "the sects of other people all deserve reverence." Trust in Buddha's guide to conduct, in the law and in the priesthood, summed up

*Asoka's  
Character.*

<sup>1</sup> Rock Edict, XIII (*Asoka*, Bhandarkar, pp. 329-334); 258 B.C. is the latest date in which all these Greek kings were alive together (*Asoka*, V. A. Smith, p. 43).

the faith Asoka urged upon his subjects. He did not speculate about *nirvana* and left all points of difference between the sects severely alone. *Dharma* was the essence of his religion.

Kingship is the predominant type of government in Indian history, and although restrained in Vedic times by the wishes of the popular assembly, the divine source of the royal authority was emphatically acknowledged. The king's first duty was to protect his people and do justice, and Asoka's edicts show his extreme conscientiousness as a ruler. Accessible at all times to his subjects, he felt that he had never done enough. His favourite maxim was "let small and great exert themselves," and he lived up to this himself. His home and foreign missions were a colossal religious achievement and a widespread influence for good. This he balanced on the material side by establishing hospitals for men and for animals throughout his own country and even in Syria, while he saw to the systematic cultivation of medicinal herbs and plants.

The royal kitchens became vegetarian soon after Asoka was converted to Buddhism, and in the twenty-six years of his reign he published a series of stringent regulations restricting the slaughter and mutilation of animals and birds and making fifty-six days of the year close times for fish.<sup>1</sup> Respect for animal life was then far from universal in the Hindu world, and the enforcement of this law must have seemed a most oppressive innovation. Yet it undoubtedly prepared the way for the future acceptance by all Hindus of the idea of the sanctity of animal life. His care for the aged and the poor,<sup>2</sup> and his rules concerning revision of capital and lesser punishment;<sup>3</sup> the three days respite to those under sentence of execution to allow for an appeal or failing that to make preparation for death;<sup>4</sup> all these are recorded in the edicts which throw so wonderful a light upon his character, and show the kindness of heart which was allied by Asoka with the undoubted severity of the Maurya system of government.

<sup>1</sup> Pillar Edict, V., *Asoka*, Bhandarkar, pp. 347-350.

<sup>2</sup> Rock Edict, V., *Ibid.*, pp. 308-315.

<sup>3</sup> Rock Edict, V., *Ibid.*, pp. 308-315.

<sup>4</sup> Pillar Edict, IV., *Ibid.*, pp. 341-346

Asoka directly governed the dominions centred upon Pataliputra, and was supreme through his viceroys in Taxila, Ujjayina and Kalinga. To the rest of the empire he was the head of a commonwealth of States whose internal administration was their own concern. He pacified the primitive tribes of the interior by bringing the Brahman gods to their knowledge. In his dealings with the frontier tribes, which in the Maurya empire were on the southern as well as the north-western borders, Asoka's primary object was to gain their trust by kindness,<sup>1</sup> and his policy was one of non-interference. It is interesting to note that nearly two thousand two hundred years later the following declaration of policy appeared in the Gazetteer of India: "The policy of the Government of India is to permit no sudden restrictions that may alter the accustomed mode of life of these tribes but rather to win confidence by kindness."

Broken only by the Kalinga war the thirty-seven years of the emperor's rule seem to have been a time of profound peace, "instead of the sound of the war drums the sound of the drum of piety (was) heard."<sup>2</sup>

In the course of his reign Asoka is traditionally believed to have built an immense number of Buddhist shrines; and he erected a pillar in the Lumbini garden when he and one of his queens went on pilgrimage to the reputed birth-place of the Buddha.

Asoka died about the year 237 B.C.,<sup>3</sup> and, with the passing of one of the greatest kings in history, India headed straight for disruption, internal war and foreign invasion.

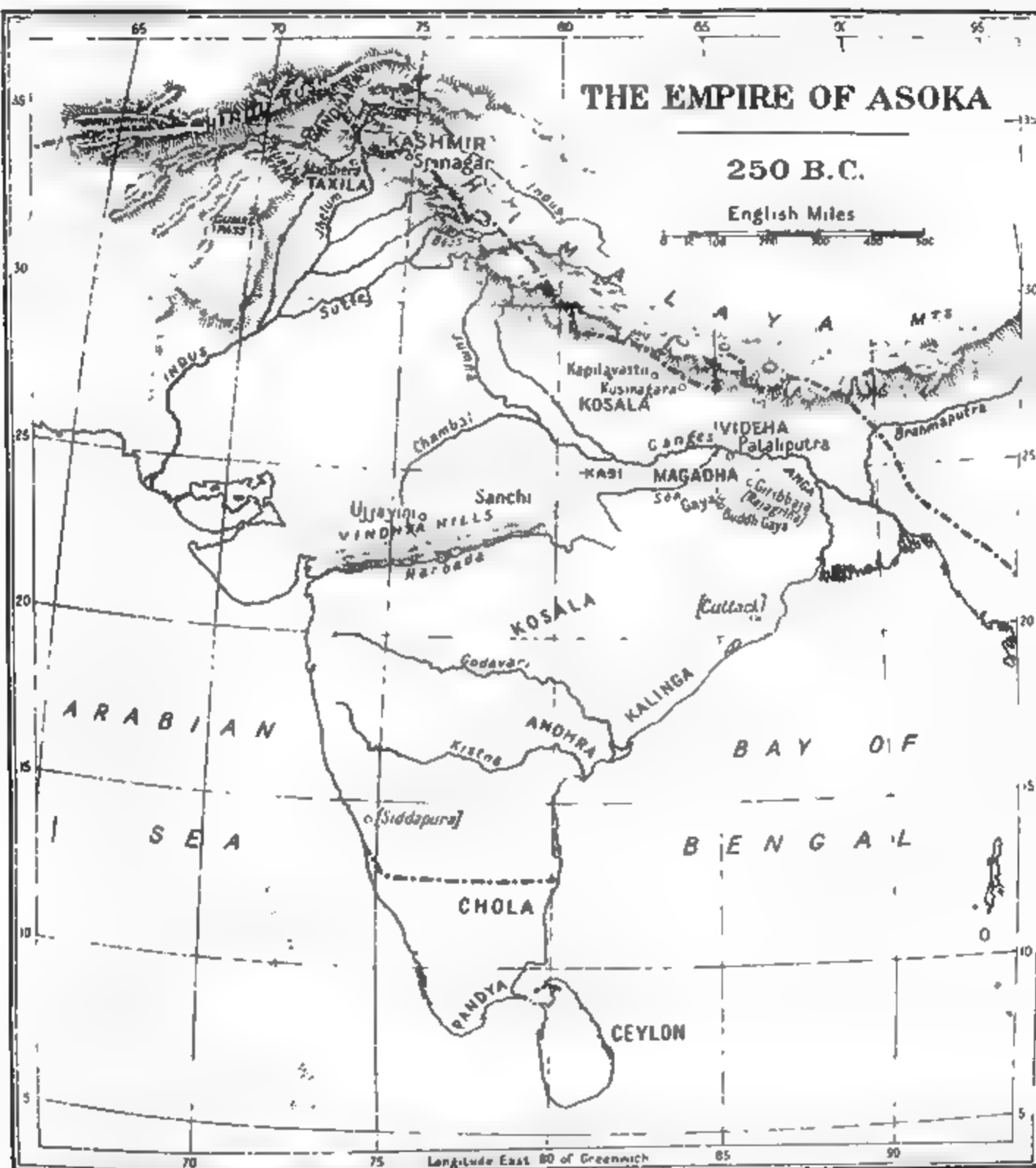
The latest book of the Three Pitakas, the *Katha-Vatthu*, was almost certainly written by Upagupta (Moggliputta) Tissa, while the great Buddhist Council at which he was a commanding figure was being held at Pataliputra. But the most celebrated author in the reign of Asoka was the emperor himself, who wrote his autobiography in his edicts on the white

<sup>1</sup> Kalinga Edict, I., *Asoka*, Bhandarkar, pp. 361-366.

<sup>2</sup> Rock Edict, IV. Translation given by V. A. Smith, *Edicts of Asoka* (Essex House Press), 1909.

<sup>3</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. p. 503, Dr. F. W. Thomas gives 237-236 B.C., Vincent Smith puts the date at 231 B.C.







quartz and granite faces of the rocks in the distant provinces and on monoliths of sandstone along the well-beaten tracks in the heart of the empire.

These inscriptions, the earliest records of non-pictographic writing in India, are not in Sanskrit, but in three different *Writing.* Prakrits, that of Magadha being the most usual; and for centuries after Asoka's death official decrees and documents were written in the Middle Indian dialect. But Sanskrit remained the language of culture. Asoka used two characters in his inscriptions. At Shahbazgarhi all the fourteen rock edicts are inscribed in Kharoshthi, and this character is employed for the same form of proclamation at Manshera. But all Asoka's other inscriptions are written in the Brahmi character.

Although there is no mention of writing in Indian literature earlier than the fourth century B.C., and Megasthenes has been misunderstood by Strabo to affirm that it did not then exist, there is evidence that writing was, at that time, no recent innovation in India. In Asoka's reign it must have been in common use in public business, in the law courts and in the book-keeping and registration of the secretariats. Moreover, the elaboration of the full Brahmi alphabet of forty-six letters from the twenty-two borrowed Semitic symbols must have taken a considerable time to evolve.<sup>1</sup> The marks used in Brahmi to denote vowels when attached to consonants are not of Semitic origin and may be derived from older Indian scripts. It is within the bounds of possibility that these may go back to the still undeciphered Mohenjo Daro script. In this script some characters have appendages which resemble the Brahmi vowels, but as they cannot at present be read the connection has not yet been established.<sup>2</sup>

The two ancient forms of writing were Kharosthi and Brahmi; and the Semitic symbols<sup>3</sup> from which they in common with the European alphabet are derived, may have been introduced as early as 800-700 B.C., by traders between Babylon and the western Indian

<sup>1</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, Macdonell, pp. 16, 17

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Department of Oriental Printed Books and MSS., British Museum, 14th November 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the oldest Northern Semitic, or Phœnician type as seen on the Moabite stone of King Mesha (c. 890-850 B.C.)

ports. Kharosthi, which was written from right to left, was a variant of the Aramaic script used in the fifth century B.C. by the Persian Government of Western Asia. Kharosthi inscriptions are not found in India later than the fifth century A.D. Brahmi, from which all later Indian alphabets are derived, was first written from right to left, then from left to right, which became the usual method. The earliest known writing materials were birch bark or palm leaves, ink and a reed pen or stylus, the ink being rubbed in afterwards, as in Ceylon today. Strabo (who died about A.D. 24), in Book XV. of his Geography, quotes Nearchus as saying that the Brahmans wrote letters on very closely woven cloth; but added that other writers contradicted their use of written characters.<sup>1</sup> The actual use of ink is proved for the second century B.C., by an inscription from a Buddhist relic mound.<sup>2</sup>

Maurya art, when uninfluenced by Persian or Mesopotamian culture, could only produce rough terra-cotta reliefs, and it may be noted that no form of china has ever been made in India. But the work of the jeweller and the lapidary show very high technical skill, as the perfectly polished rock-crystal Buddhist reliquary found in the Piprahwa Stupa exemplifies. The earliest known Indian work in ivory is an inscription at Sanchi dating from about 200 to 150 B.C.<sup>3</sup> The punch-marked currency, with its conventional designs, has no artistic merit.

Bricks were only just coming into use, and those in the ruins of such places as the Buddhist university at Sarnath, are crude and unwieldy. In spite of the reputation for building gained by Asoka, the existing monuments which can be attributed to him are few in number, and range from the great pillared hall at Patna to the Buddhist chaitya caves cut in solid rock. From the standpoint of history, art and engineering skill the monolithic pillars of highly polished sandstone set up by the emperor are the most striking feature; and their dignity and massive simplicity are typical of the architecture of the period. They may be

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient India*, McCrindle, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, Macdonell, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, A. Coomaraswamy, p. 175.

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attributed to Persian influence and so can be traced back to the original Assyrian models. With Asoka begins the use of stone in India for building, sculpture and decorating, as the rail at Sarnath and the throne at Buddh Gaya, each cut from a single block of stone, bear witness.

The Maurya dynasty did not long survive the death of its great emperor. Contradictory lists of kings given in *Fall of the Maurya Empire.* Brahman and Buddhist literature are historically useless, but the empire was eventually divided, about the third generation after Asoka, into an eastern and a western kingdom. This was the beginning of the end.

In 250 B.C. the satrapies of Parthia and Bactria had rebelled against Antiochus I. This created in Bactria an aggressive and ambitious power in the north-west. But while Asoka's armies had been well able to protect his empire, the divided rule of the later Mauryas was too feeble to resist invasion, and Bactria absorbed most of Afghanistan.

Parthia and Bactria kept their independence until between 212 and 206 B.C., when Antiochus III, partly by force of arms and partly by diplomacy, temporarily reasserted Seleucid supremacy.

Parthia was beaten and Euthydemus of Bactria made peace with honour. Antiochus then went on to make an "in and out" raid into India before he hurried westwards towards Mesopotamia to his ultimate fate when he met the rising power of Rome.

The way was now clear for the Bactrian invasion of North-West India; and after the death of Euthydemus about 190 B.C., his son, Demetrius I, completed the conquest of the States bordering on the Indus. His triumph was short-lived. In his absence from Bactria a successful rebellion was raised by Eucratides, an able and energetic soldier, and Demetrius found that he had merely exchanged his own kingdom for that of "India." Nor did he hold his newly-won territory for long. Demetrius probably died about 160 B.C., but before that date Eucratides had followed him down into the plains and made himself master of the old Indian provinces of the Persian Empire, leaving to Demetrius the eastern districts of the Punjab.

The last fragments of Maurya rule had been swept out of North-Western India.

In the eastern kingdom the dynasty came to an end about the year 184 B.C., in a dramatic repetition of history. The country of the Indus lay under the shadow of Yavana rule as it had a hundred and thirty-seven years before, and once again a commander-in-chief of the Magadha army slew his master and founded a new dynasty. Brihadratha was the last of the Maurya kings, and with his murderer Pushyamitra, first of the Sunga line, the kingdom of Magadha sank into obscurity. It was to emerge five hundred years later as an empire, and the founder of its second supremacy bore the historic name of Chundragupta.

## CHRONOLOGY

B.C.

- 327-326. Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, invaded India.
- 326 (July). Retreat from the Beas.
- 325. Alexander left India.
- 323. Death of Alexander.
- 321. Accession of Chandragupta (Sandracottus), first Maurya Emperor.
- 305. Indian expedition of Seleucus Nicator and treaty of peace with Chandragupta.
- 300. Megasthenes at the court of Chandragupta.
- 297. Accession of Bindusara Maurya (Amitrocrates).
- 274. Accession of Asoka.
- 270. Coronation of Asoka.
- 262. Conquest of Kalinga, and conversion of Asoka to Buddhism.
- 260. Asoka became a monk and began active propaganda.
- 259. Asoka issued his first edict ("The Fruit of Exertion," Brahmagiri).
- 258-7. Issue of the fourteen rock edicts and dedication of cave dwellings in Barabar Hills.
- 253. Council of Pataliputra.
- 250. Establishment of kingdom of Parthia by Arsaces and of Bactria by Diodotus.
- 246. Conversion of Ceylon to Buddhism by Mahendra, the son of Asoka, in the year of the coronation of King Devanampiya Tissa.
- 243-2. Issue of Asoka's pillar edicts (V. Smith, *Asoka*, p. 146, places the pillar and minor pillar edicts between the 27th and 38th regnal years; *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. p. 503, assumes Asoka's reign to have lasted thirty-six or thirty-seven years, as the Puranas and Pali books affirm).

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- 237-6. Death of Asoka, followed by Maurya kings, beginning with Kunala.
- c. 220. Establishment of Andhra kingdom (Satavahana line), and Kalinga (Cheta dynasty).
- 212-206. Antiochus III, the Great, King of Syria, invaded Parthia and Bactria and made a raid into India.
- c. 197. Invasion of N.W. India, probably begun by Euthydemus, King of Bactria.
- c. 190. Death of Euthydemus and accession of his son Demetrius who invaded the Punjab.
- c. 184. Pushyamitra, first of the Sunga kings of Magadha, murdered Brihadratha, last of the Mauryas.
- c. 175. Eucratides headed successful rebellion in Bactria and prior to 162 B.C. conquered most of the territories of Demetrius in India.
- c. 175. Menander (Milinda) rose to power, first in Kabul, later in India.
- c. 169. Accession of Kharavela of the Cheta dynasty of Kalinga.
- c. 160. Death of Demetrius.

The above chronology is taken from the *Cambridge History of India*. The dates in Asoka's reign are based on the regnal years given in the royal edicts and are only approximate. The dates of the establishment of the Andhra and Kalinga kingdoms, and campaigns of Antiochus the Great are conjectural.

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## CHAPTER III

### Early Hindu India

The two main features of the rule of Asoka had been the strength of the central government and Buddhist missionary activity. The first, which bound together in security and peace the commonwealth of States within the empire, was inherited, but the emperor had the necessary force of character to maintain it. The second was due to his own personal fervour. The predominance of Buddhism did not long survive Asoka, for his death was followed by a strong reaction in favour of Brahmanism, and Pushyamitra, the founder of the Sunga dynasty, figures in Buddhist literature as a relentless persecutor of Buddhism.

Peace and security disappeared throughout India directly the imperial government at the centre failed in its primary duty, which was to govern. Pataliputra remained for about three hundred years the capital of a kingdom of some size,<sup>1</sup> first under the later Mauryas and then under the Sungas; but the empire fell back into the pieces from which it had been built up, a number of States fighting for supremacy or struggling to survive. In the Dravidian south Kalinga asserted its independence soon after Asoka's death, and the Andhras, who had apparently acknowledged the emperor's supremacy, created a kingdom, possibly before 200 B.C., which stretched from the Bay of Bengal to the Western Ghats and north to the Nerbada River.

A disunited India was powerless to resist attack from without as the conquests made by the Yavana invaders immediately demonstrated. The decline of the Maurya power was the fatal prelude to successive waves of foreign conquest.

These invasions all followed the same routes. The barrier of the

<sup>1</sup> For the possible extent of the kingdom of Magadha under the Sungas, see the review of this uncertain point on p. 527 of *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I.



## EARLY HINDU INDIA

Himalaya with the bleak tableland of Tibet behind it, presents an insurmountable obstacle and the only irruption into Hindustan directly from the North has been made from the southern slopes of the main range by Nepal. But along the North-West border open the mountain passes through which conqueror after conqueror has led his armies into India.

For a long period of history, the ocean remained a protection as sure as the Himalaya. Rulers of Egypt from the days of Sesostrius in the twentieth century B.C., had tried in vain to cut the Suez Canal, and the coast of India was inviolate until European adventurers rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

When the Seleucid and Maurya Empires were at the height of their power, free intercourse and trade had flourished between Pataliputra and the western world. But the successful revolts of Bactria and Parthia, and the events which followed, completely changed the situation in West-Central Asia, and had a profound effect upon India itself. Two hostile States were established upon the great waterway of the Oxus and upon the most important trade routes of Central Asia which all converged in Bactria. North-Western India was overwhelmed by a series of invaders, and the whole sub-continent became isolated from the West. The intercourse with the western world which still survived was maintained by sea commerce with Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The rival Bactrian houses of Eucratides (in Gandhara and Taxila), and of Euthydemus (to the east of the Jhelum), held sway with varying fortunes until they, in their turn, were invaded in the first century B.C. But with the exceptions of Eucratides, and Euthydemus I, and his son, Demetrius I, Menander is the one ruler of historical importance, and the only Yavana celebrated in ancient Indian literature. He is the Milinda of the *Milindapanha* (Questions of Milinda), and was probably a Buddhist. In this Pali treatise of Buddhist philosophy it is recorded that "as a disputant he was hard to equal, harder still to overcome; the acknowledged superior of all the founders of the various schools of thought. As in wisdom, so in strength of body, swiftness and valour there was found none equal to Milinda in all India. He was

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rich too, mighty in wealth and prosperity, and the number of his armed hosts knew no end.”<sup>1</sup> His fame lived on after his death and beyond the border of his own country, for Plutarch two centuries later refers to the honour in which his memory was held in India.

From the evidence of his coinage, Menander ruled over a number of kingdoms, from what is now Kabul to the Punjab, and in the western districts of the United Provinces. He waged ceaseless war with his rival and contemporary Eucratides and was almost certainly the Yavana who made an enterprising raid eastwards and threatened, if he did not actually take, Pataliputra. But he took Sakala from the Sunga Pushyamitra and held it, making the place his capital.

None of the other Bactrian rulers in Northern India have left behind them more than the inscriptions on their  
*Coinage of Bactrian Rulers.* varied and abundant coinage. These coins have, however, two points of interest. Certain specimens struck in Bactria before 200 B.C. are of nickel, a metal which was not known in Europe until its discovery by Swedish scientists about the middle of the eighteenth century A.D. The other interesting feature is to be found in the series of bilingual coins, the first of which were struck by Demetrius I, or possibly by another king of the same name who came soon after him, early in the second century B.C.

The coins of these Eurasian Greeks were at first strictly Hellenistic, and of almost incomparable artistic beauty; later they deteriorated. But the bilingual coinage struck for the use of conquerors and conquered in India has been of the greatest value quite apart from the names of kings made known by the superscriptions, and the extent of their rule as indicated by the localities where the coins have been chiefly found. The obverse of these coins bears a Greek legend, and the reverse an Indian Prakrit translation in Kharoshthi characters. The clue to that alphabet which this provides has made it possible to translate long inscriptions on stone and copper plates found in different parts of India.

<sup>1</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXV., T. W. Rhys Davids, pp. 6, 7.

## EARLY HINDU INDIA

Yavana rule in India did not long remain unchallenged. Scythians, known as Sakas, under pressure of Chinese nomads called Yueh-chi behind them, moved steadily westward across Central Asia and conquered Bactria. The Yavana kings were driven out by the Sakas about 135 B.C., and the unwarlike native inhabitants of the country, preoccupied by trade, exchanged one set of rulers for another. Taking the line of least resistance, through what is now Western and Southern Afghanistan and Baluchistan, the Sakas went on and poured into the country of the Lower Indus. With these invaders the Pahlavas (Parthians of Seistan and the Kandahar district) were so closely associated as to be almost indistinguishable. The house of Eucratides, however, kept their hold on the country south of the Hindu Kush and in the Kabul Valley until conquered by the Pahlavas about 25 B.C.

The conquests of the Sakas and Pahlavas, extending as far east as the region of the Jumna, drove a wedge between the rival Yavana kings. These Scythian territories were governed by satraps, the system instituted by Persia and continued first by Alexander and then by the Maurya emperors. Sakas and Pahlavas alike, these rulers, in common with the Parthian monarchs, claimed on their coinage the suzerain title of King of Kings. The house of Euthydemus continued to rule in the Eastern Punjab until the Saka King Azes I conquered their territory about 58 B.C.

These invasions, and the huge expansion of the semi-barbaric power of Parthia under Mithradates I to the Hindu Kush on the east and westward to the River Euphrates, isolated India by land from the west, and her intercourse with the outside world swung eastward to China. This orientation was brought about by the coming of the Yueh-chi, who had followed hard upon the heels of the Sakas; and for centuries foreign descriptions of the country, once the monopoly of the Greek ambassador or adventurer, are to be found only in the reports of an envoy from the Court of China, or the diary of one of the many Chinese pilgrims who came to visit the holy places of Buddhism in India.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

While invader followed invader through the passes to bring chaos into North-Western India, the more powerful of the Dravidian States in the south were steadily expanding into important kingdoms.

Before the Maurya period the Dravidians had a definite culture of their own, which was entirely independent of Brahmanism and the caste system. This civilization and the languages of the people remain predominant in Southern India to this day; and there can be no doubt that Dravidian culture has very greatly influenced Aryan civilization and Aryan religion in the north. It is to the work of the Jain monks that the growth of this civilization and the literary development of the Kanarese and Tamil languages, some centuries after the Christian era, are largely due.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the Maurya Empire a Dravidian king had supreme control subject to the advice of his "Five Great Assemblies," which are said to have represented ministers, chaplains, generals, commissioners and secret agents. It is possible that the Dravidian local-government system of village representation is their equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon "shire moot," and had already been evolved. The highest social class in a Tamil<sup>2</sup> community were the sages, and next to them the landowners. Herdsmen, hunters, artisans and soldiers ranked next, with fishers and scavengers at the bottom of the scale.<sup>3</sup>

Long before Asoka came to the throne some of the Dravidian States were exporting by sea to Western Asia, Egypt and Greece, pepper<sup>4</sup> and ginger, cinnamon and rice, as well as such luxuries as spices, precious stones and tortoise-shell. This trade was enormously increased when the Roman Empire became all-powerful in the Near East, and reached its height in the time of Nero. Golden *aurei* as well as silver and copper coinage poured into India to an extent which, according to Pliny, greatly strained Roman finance. One of the numerous Roman

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient India*, Rapson, pp. 9, 29, 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Dravida* is *Damila* in Pali.

<sup>3</sup> See *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. Ch. XXIV.

<sup>4</sup> The English word "pepper" is derived through the Greek *peperi* from the Tamil *pippali*, and other Indian commodities such as ginger have a similar derivation.

## EARLY HINDU INDIA

coins found in Southern India makes the first introduction of the British Isles to the country in the shape of a gold piece struck by the Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) to commemorate the Roman conquest of Britain.

Hippalus, a sea-captain, is credited with the discovery in A.D. 45 of the monsoon-winds, and the long coast voyage of the Greek vessels was exchanged for a direct sea passage. This brought Alexandria within about two months of the Indian coast. The record<sup>1</sup> for the crossing of the Arabian Sea appears to have been made by a ship caught in the monsoon off the Arabian coast and blown to Ceylon in fifteen days; Scylax, in the days of Darius, had taken two and a half years to sail from what is now Attock on the Indus to Suez.

The Andhras, or Telugus as they are now called, who had asserted complete independence after the death of Asoka, are said by Pliny<sup>2</sup> to have possessed thirty fortified towns and maintained an army of 1000 elephants, 2000 cavalry and 100,000 infantry. The Andhra dominion was extended about the middle of the second century B.C. to Ujjayina (Ujain), then, as now, one of the seven holy places of Hinduism, and later, when the Sunga dynasty came to an end, to Videsa.

Nor was this the only blow dealt at the heart of what had been the Maurya Empire by the Dravidian people of the south. The Kalinga power had greatly increased after they won their independence, and King Kharavela, about 150 B.C., claimed a population of 350,000 in his capital. This ruler invaded Northern India time after time, and at some unknown date the Kalinga army heavily defeated the king then reigning at Pataliputra.

The Sunga dynasty is noteworthy only for the strong probability that Patanjali lived during the reign of Pushyamitra (178-142 B.C.). This author wrote the *Mahabhashya*, the great commentary on Panini's grammar of about three centuries earlier, incidentally making the earliest references to the acted drama in the "Slaying of Kamsa" and the "Binding of Bali," episodes in the story of

<sup>1</sup> See *India and the Western World*, Rawlinson, pp. 109-111.

<sup>2</sup> *History*, VI. 19 (22).

Krishna.<sup>1</sup> The end of the Sungas came about the year 72 B.C. They were originally feudatories of the Maurya emperors, with their headquarters at Videsa, and this remained their western capital after Pushyamitra, the first of the Sungas, seized the throne. They had become puppets in the hands of their Brahman ministers, and the dissolute Devabhuti, last of the Sungas, was murdered at the instigation of his mayor of the palace, a Kanva Brahman. According to the Puranas, in their present form, this minister Vasudeva started a line of Kanva kings, afterwards destroyed with what was left of the Sunga power by the Andhras.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the numerous obscure independent States scattered over India at this period, there were two groups of clans, some under kings, but the majority ruled by tribal oligarchies, that were destined later on to take an important place in the history of Northern India. These communities living in the north of the Punjab, east of the Ravi, and at the junction of the Indus and the Sutlej, were Kshatriya, and the ancestors of the Rajputs, so-called after Rajputana, the cradle of the race. Two of their States issued coins as early as the first century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

This brief survey of India, from south to north after the fall of the Maurya Empire, brings us back to the north-west frontier, where yet another invasion was about to inundate the country and engulf Yavana, Saka and Pahlava alike. Mention has already been made of the Yueh-chi and their movement across Central Asia. About the year 165 B.C. this people, living between the mountains of Kan-su province and the Great Wall of China, were defeated by the Huns and driven from their own country. They numbered probably more than half a million souls, and in their westward march pushed on before them the other nomads in their way. When

<sup>1</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 347. For Patanjali's date see *Collected Works*, R. G. Bhandarkar, Vol I p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb Hist. India*, Vol I p. 522, gives reasons for discrediting the existence of a Kanva dynasty. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar observes that the Sungas may well have been reigning while the Kanvas were ruling just as the rajas of Satara reigned while the Peshwas held the true power. *Collected Works*, Vol I p. 513.

<sup>3</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol I p. 528, together with Plate V. (13).

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the Chinese envoy Changk'ien visited the Yueh-chi in 126 B.C., they were still north of the Oxus River; but from this point it becomes hopeless to fix the chronology of their movements. Probably about 70 B.C. the five Yueh-chi tribes absorbed Bactria, and a little later than A.D. 25 the chief of the Kushanas gained complete supremacy and united the hordes into a kingdom under the name of his own tribe. Once again Bactria became the base for an invasion of India, and the Kushanas soon made themselves masters of modern Southern Afghanistan, then under the rule of the Pahlava suzerain, who was possibly Gondopharnes. This conquest took place about the middle of the first century A.D.

Gondopharnes had begun to reign in A.D. 19. He was suzerain over Eastern and North-West India, and during his sovereignty, which certainly lasted until A.D. 45,<sup>1</sup> the Pahlava power was at its height. But it is not on the extent of his reign, or of his authority, that interest is focused, at least from the standpoint of Christianity. Gondopharnes is the Guvnaphar "King of India" to whose court St. Thomas the apostle is said to have gone during his traditional mission in the country before suffering martyrdom at Mylapore, near Madras. All that is definitely known of St. Thomas is to be found in the Fourth Gospel. All that can be said for the tradition is that the *Acta Thomae*, preserved in Syriac and Greek, on which the legend is founded, was written at the beginning of the third century A.D.; that a granite cross with a seventh-century inscription marks the place where strong local tradition affirms that the apostle was martyred; that a bishop "from India and Persia" was present at the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325; that, on the Malabar coast, a body of Christians still use a form of Syriac for their liturgical language; and that the date is historically possible.<sup>2</sup>

Gondopharnes was followed by Pasores, but by A.D. 79 the Kushanas were ruling in India. Their victorious leader, V'ima Kadphises, "Great King, Supreme King of Kings, son of the Gods,

<sup>1</sup> Takht-i-Bahi monument, in the Peshawar district, dated the twenty-sixth year of his reign.

<sup>2</sup> Father H. Thurston, S.J., who is a rigid critic, sums up against the tradition; *vide Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV. pp. 658, 659.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

the Kushana," had, it is assumed, already been succeeded by Kanishka, the third of their kings. By the year A.D. 89 the suzerainty of the Kushanas seems to have been extended to the country of the Lower Indus. The domination of the new invaders of Northern India was secure. But the confusion of an obscure period is worse confounded by the name of Saka being given to the chronological era founded by Kanishka in A.D. 78.

Sakas and Pahlavas continued to rule their own States in the country of the Lower Indus, under Kushana suzerainty,<sup>1</sup> which did not, however, prevent them from making war on each other.

Under the leadership of these satraps the Kushan Empire was extended to Surashta and Malwa in Western India, and from the second century to the end of the fourth this region was governed by Saka princes, until its conquest by the Guptas a hundred and fifty years or more after the extinction of the Kushan Empire. This gave the name of Saka in Indian literature and inscriptions<sup>2</sup> to what is really the Kanishka era. The Sakas had rapidly become Hinduized, and by the second generation most of them had Indian names. An inscription in which one of them describes his exploits is composed in a mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit,<sup>3</sup> neither of which was the language of his forefathers.

The collision, in about A.D. 90, of the Kushan power with China, did not affect the rest of India. But in the reign of Kanishka, when Buddhism came to be enthusiastically supported by that ruler, the empire formed a connecting link between China and India. This brought Buddhism to China and the Far East, and an Indian culture, Indian alphabet and languages found their way into Chinese Turkestan. Kanishka himself appears to have combined other cults with his devotion to the primitive form of Buddhism, although the theology of the Mahayana, which closely corresponded to Hindu ideas, had by this time developed.

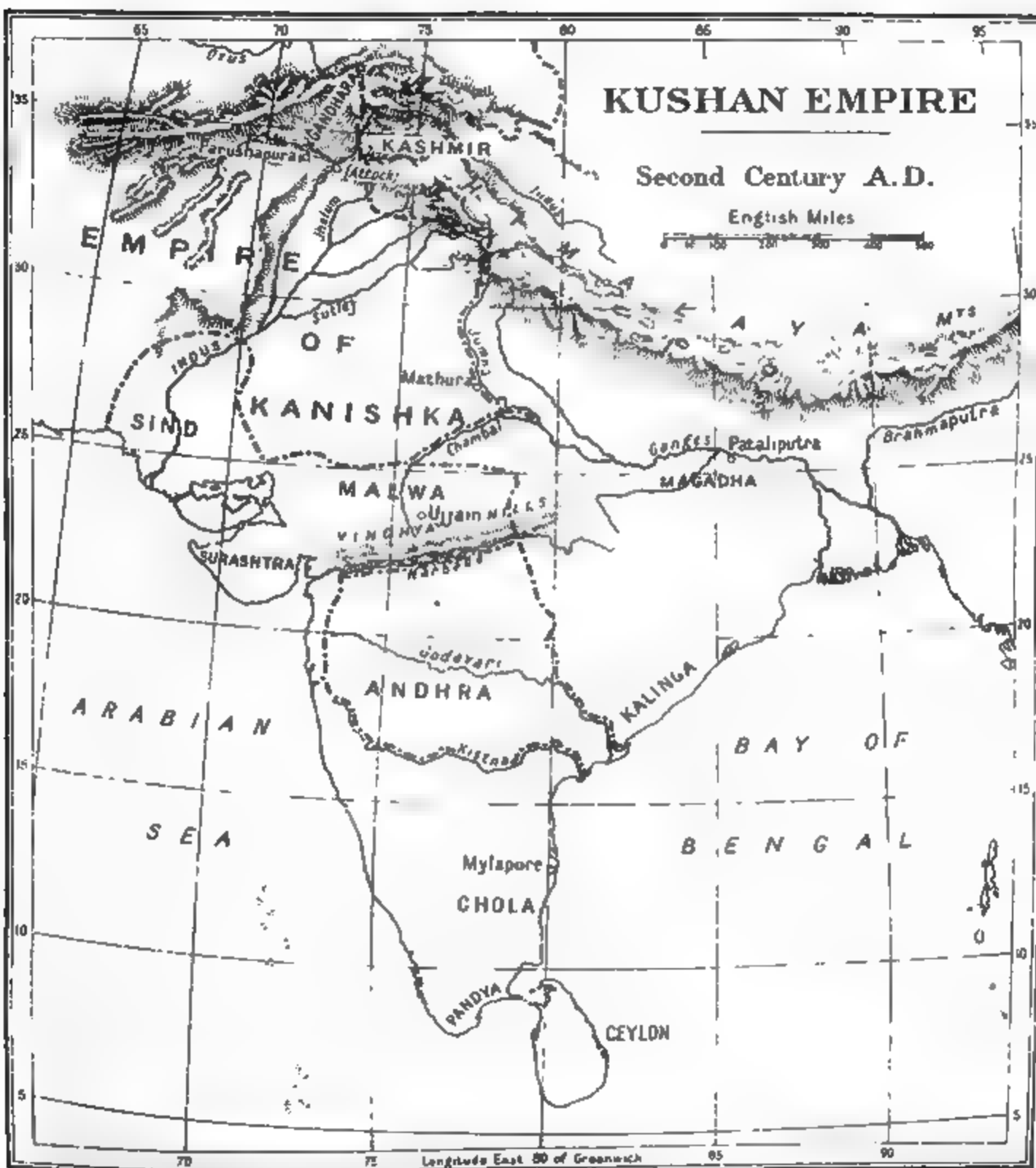
The Gandhara school of art had come into existence in the days

<sup>1</sup> See Vihara inscription (Bahawalpur State) dated the eleventh year of King Kanishka (A.D. 89).

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. I. p. 585.

<sup>3</sup> Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 322, 323.







of the Saka supremacy in the north; and now, stimulated by Kushan enthusiasm, it developed those conceptions of sculpture which have left an indelible mark on Buddhist art throughout the East. In earlier days the figure of Buddha had not been directly represented; it now became the central idea of Buddhist sculpture.

Kanishka built a great monastery at his capital, Purushapura (Peshawar), which was still a famous seat of Buddhist learning up to the ninth or tenth century. He died after a reign of from twenty-five to thirty years and was succeeded by Huviska.

Huviska seems to have kept intact the Kushan Empire in India, together with the Chinese States of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, which his predecessor had won. He, too, was a Buddhist, and founded a magnificent monastery at Mathura. Vasudeva followed him, and his Hindu name, coupled with the fact that his coins almost invariably have on them the Indian god Siva and his bull, with the insignia of the noose and trident, show that he had absorbed the civilization and the religion of the conquered people.

The empire broke up sometime about the close of Vasudeva's long reign (c. A.D. 226), but Kushan kings continued to rule in Kabul until the Hun invasion of the fifth century. The north-west now relapsed into a number of independent States like the rest of India.

In the Deccan the Andhra power had declined about the end of the second century, after Rudradaman, the western satrap, annexed Surashtra, Malwa and other districts; and, towards the middle of the third century, what had been the Andhra kingdom of the Satavahana dynasty, disappeared altogether.

Nothing within historical times in India is more uncertain than the chronology of the Kushan period. The dates given in the *Cambridge History of India* have been followed in this account; but it must be noted that Mr. V. A. Smith<sup>1</sup> puts the accession of King Kanishka at A.D. 120-125, while Sir R. G. Bhandarkar considers

<sup>1</sup> *Early History of India* and *Oxford History of India* (as revised by S. M. Edwardes), 1928 impression. In the latter, which is the latest edition of Vincent Smith's history, it is considered that Kadphises I died about A.D. 77-78 and that the era dates from the succession of his son Kadphises II (see pp. 127, 128).

that Kanishka's reign began about A.D. 260 and that his successors held North-West India to Mathura until Chandragupta II took it from them.<sup>1</sup>

Chaotic darkness had fallen upon India with the disruption of the Maurya Empire, and it lasted until the beginning of the fourth century, when it was dispelled by the rise of another great Indian Empire with its capital at Pataliputra. *Chandragupta I.* Chandragupta Maurya had ascended the throne of Magadha over the dead body of his murdered master, and secured it by wiping out the entire royal family.

Chandragupta, first of the Gupta dynasty, founded his fortunes upon his marriage, which he freely acknowledged when he issued his coinage in the joint names of himself, his queen, and the historic Lichchhavi clan to which she belonged. It would seem that the Lichchhavi had taken Pataliputra when the Sunga rule decayed, and Chandragupta now succeeded to the power held by his wife's family. His alliance in about 308 with Kumara Devi was the stepping-stone by which he rose from the insignificance of a local chieftain to the height of a paramount sovereign, and the founder of a new era. Year I of the Gupta era, the year of Chandragupta's coronation as heir to the imperial power of Pataliputra, has been fixed between A.D. 318 and 320. This era, one of more than thirty instituted by different Indian rulers, was in use for several hundred years and has been of the greatest value in turning conjectural dates into definite historical sequence.

Chandragupta I enlarged his kingdom by conquest up the Ganges Valley to its junction with the Jumna, and ruled what are now Tirhut, Bihar and Oudh. He was succeeded by the son of his choice, Samudragupta, the greatest king of the dynasty, after a reign of about six years.

Samudragupta on his accession began at once to make himself master of Hindustan. The series of successful campaigns, which brought under his direct control the country between the Jumna and the Chambal rivers on the west,

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, Vol. I pp. 40, 520.

the Hooghly on the east, and the foothills of the Himalaya and the line of the Narbada River to north and south, have been described by his court poet Harishena. Eleven kings of the south, nine kings of Aryavarta (the most fertile and thickly populated country of Northern India), the chiefs of the primitive forest tribes, and the rulers of the frontier kingdoms and republics, were forced to acknowledge his power. The itinerary of his southern campaign alone must have involved more than three thousand miles of marching for a period of at least three years. The probable date of this great military enterprise is about A.D. 340.<sup>1</sup> Samudragupta made no attempt to bring the southern kingdoms within his empire. He fought his way through South Kosala, defeated the Pallava kings of Kanchi (Conjeeveram) and Palakha (Palghatcherry), exacted the temporary submission of the States he invaded, and then returned through the western part of the Deccan.

Samudragupta was the most able soldier of a line of fighting kings, and although his suzerainty did not reach the Punjab, and the Saka Satrap Rudrasinha still ruled in Ujjain over the country from Malwa to Sind, he was overlord of the one Indian Empire there had been for more than five hundred years. The kingdoms on the east of the Ganges and upon the southern slopes of the Himalaya were under his protection, and he maintained friendly relations with the Kushan King of Kabul and with the King of Ceylon.

When his fighting days were over he had Harishena's panegyric cut in stone, and with cynical humour selected one of Asoka's pillars (now standing in the fort at Allahabad) on which to record his military achievements. This (with the Eran inscription in the Sagar district), helped out by his coinage, have enabled archæological research within the last hundred years to rescue Samudragupta from complete oblivion.<sup>2</sup> For these thirty lines of poetry and about an equal length of prose are the only surviving accounts of Samudragupta's wars. To celebrate one of his triumphs and to proclaim his suzerainty, the emperor, an orthodox Hindu, revived the rite

<sup>1</sup> *Early History of India*, V. A. Smith, pp. 248-250, *ibid.*, p. 245, gives 326 as the date of Samudragupta's accession.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

of the horse sacrifice which had probably not been performed in Northern India since Pushyamitra asserted his paramountcy after the defeat of the King of Vidarbha.

The later years of Samudragupta's long reign seem to have been spent in the peaceful encouragement of the arts. The emperor was himself a poet, and a patron of poets, and in Harishena he found his poet laureate. The Gupta supremacy and the reign of Harsha are the golden age of Hindu literature, and this is surveyed as a whole at the end of the period.

The date of Samudragupta's death is uncertain.<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded by the son he had made his heir who, *Chandragupta II.* by Hindu custom, took the name of his grandfather, adding to it the title of Vikramaditya (son of power).

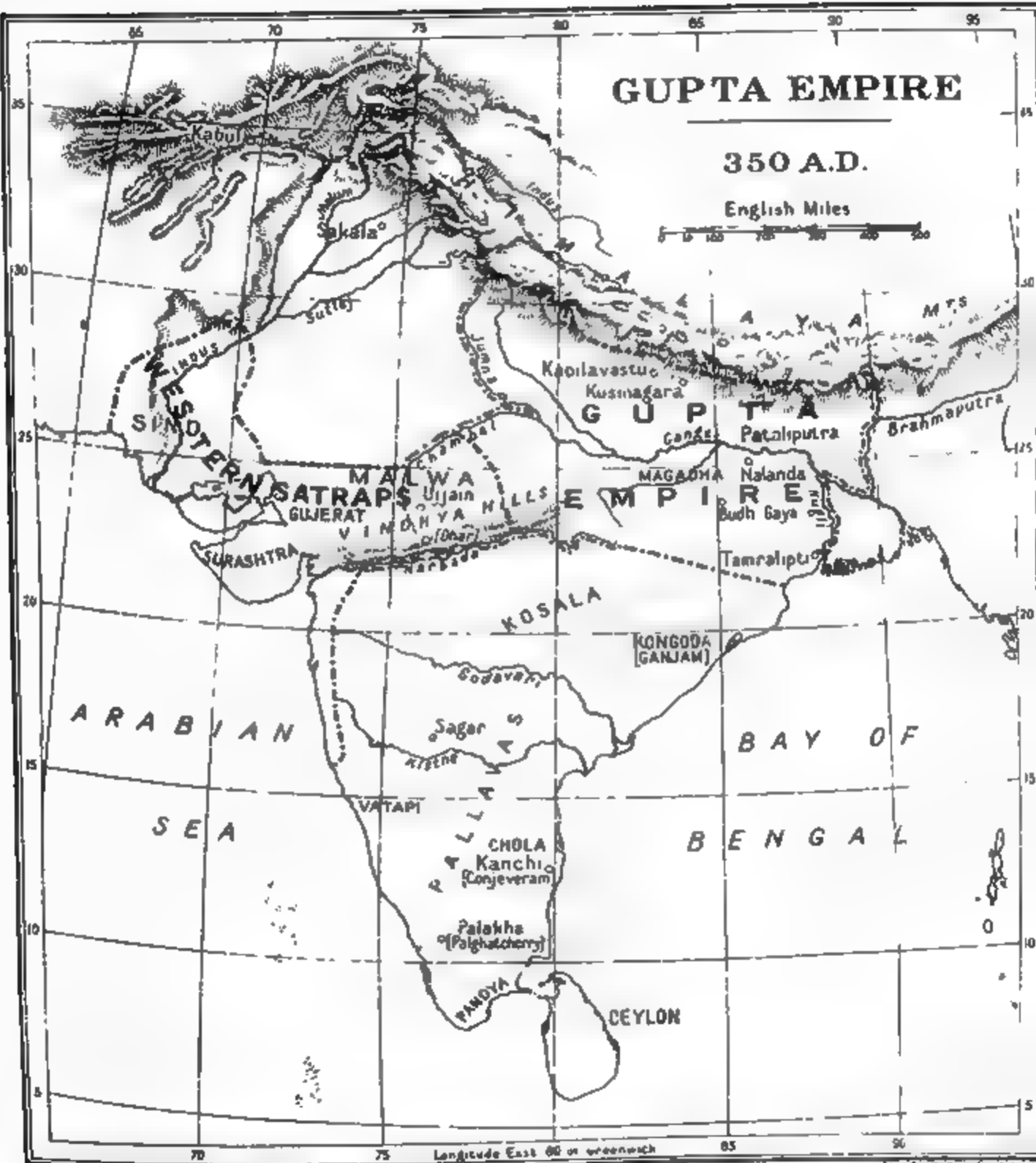
Like his father before him, Chandragupta II was an ambitious soldier, and he extended his empire in every direction but the south. The campaigns in Bengal are recorded on the famous Iron Pillar at Delhi, which, as an example of early Indian metallurgy, is itself an achievement. Not only is the mass of iron larger than any which European foundries could handle until the latter part of the nineteenth century, but the pillar, though fully exposed to the weather, has never rusted and the inscription remains today as clear as when it was cut.<sup>2</sup> It commemorates the king's war against the Vanga countries and a campaign in which he crossed the "seven mouths of the Indus" and conquered an unidentified people called the Vahlka. There is a still larger iron column at Dhar, over 42 feet in length, which was cast about the year A.D. 320.

But by far the most important operations undertaken by Chandragupta II were his western campaigns. These are known to have taken place between A.D. 388-401,<sup>3</sup> and resulted in the overthrow of the western satraps. Malwa, Gujarat and the peninsula of Surashtra (Kathiawar) were annexed, and the western ports which fell into Chandragupta's hands brought his empire into direct commercial intercourse by sea with Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> V. A. Smith puts it at about 375 (*Early History of India*, p. 254).

<sup>2</sup> *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, A. Coomaraswamy, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Early History of India*, V. A. Smith, p. 255.



# GUPTA EMPIRE

350 A.D.

English Miles







## EARLY HINDU INDIA

During the reign of Chandragupta II, a Buddhist monk Fa-hien came through Central Asia from his home in China and visited India between 399 and 414. He crossed the Indus by a suspension bridge, as travellers in Kashmir and Southern Tibet swing their way over rivers to this day, and finally reached the Hooghly. His one object, which he secured at Pataliputra, was to obtain the Disciplinary Rules for monks which form the second part of the *Tripitaka*. Fa-hien saw everything with the eyes of a pious pilgrim, and his account is almost entirely made up of Buddhist legends and descriptions of sacred relics. He failed to realize that in spite of the many monasteries, with monks who might be counted by thousands, whose hospitality he enjoyed, Buddhism was losing its hold upon India. But in his occasional observations on the outside world he has given to posterity a valuable description of life under the Guptas as he saw it.<sup>1</sup> The book would be well worth reading for its irrelevant final chapter alone, which vividly describes the storm during Fa-hien's homeward voyage with his precious manuscripts, and he is regarded as a Jonah.

Fa-hien says of the "Middle Kingdom," by which he means the country of the Ganges Valley: "The people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households or attend to any magistrates and their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay (a portion of) the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The king governs without decapitation or (other) corporal punishments; criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the circumstances. Even (in) cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off. The king's body-guards and attendants all have salaries. Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquors; the only exception being the butchers (*chandalas*),<sup>2</sup> who are wicked men living apart. In that country they do not keep pigs and fowls, and do not sell live

<sup>1</sup> *Fa-hien's Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, Legge

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Legge in a footnote (p. 43, *ibid*) refers to Dr. Eitel's *Handbook for the Student of Chinese Buddhism* (pp. 145, 146) on this point.

cattle; in the markets there are no butchers' shops. In buying and selling commodities they use cowries." <sup>1</sup>

At Pataliputra, Fa-hien was greatly impressed by the stone palace with its carving, which had been built by Asoka, and by the two big monasteries, one Mahayana and one Hinayana, in each of which lived from six to seven hundred monks. <sup>2</sup>

In his account of the kingdom of Magadha he goes on to say: "The heads of the Vaisya families establish in the cities houses for dispensing charity and medicines. All the poor and destitute in the country, orphans, widowers and childless men, maimed people and cripples, and all who are diseased, go to those houses and are provided with every kind of help, and doctors examine their diseases. They get the food and medicines which their cases require and when they are better they go away of themselves." <sup>3</sup>

The only danger to travellers mentioned by Fa-hien was from the large numbers of lions, tigers and wolves, <sup>4</sup> and the reader is reminded of a verse in Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayam," by the observation that Gaya was by this time utterly deserted and the once great and wealthy city of Svagasti then held about two hundred families, while Budh Gaya, Kapilavastu and Kusinagara, all of them holy places of Buddhism, were desolate <sup>5</sup> The whole countryside had not shared in the prosperity he saw on his journey through India.

These are the main points of social interest in the Diary. When comparing them with conditions under the Mauryas, *Yajnavalkya*, it must be remembered that Kautilya was a prime minister laying down his theory and method of government, while Fa-hien was a Chinese pilgrim observing the working of what must have been a more easy-going rule. The official view of government administration under the Guptas may be taken from the *Dharma Sastra* of Yajnavalkya (the most influential Indian lawgiver, with the exception of Manu), who probably lived in Videha State about A.D. 350. <sup>6</sup> Yajnavalkya says that "to inflict punishment or death

<sup>1</sup> Fa-hien, Ch. XVI

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Ch. XXVII.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. XXVII.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Ch. XXXIII.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, Chs. XX., XXII., XXIV., XXXI.

<sup>6</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, Macdonell, pp. 428, 429.

on those who deserve it is to perform many sacrifices and bestow the finest gifts." But punishment is never to be arbitrary.<sup>1</sup> Yajnavalkya agrees in general with Kautalya, but it seems certain that the application of the penal code was much less strict than it had been in the Maurya Empire.

Chandragupta Vikramaditya was followed, between 411 and 414, by his son Kumaragupta I, who celebrated some long-forgotten triumph in the horse sacrifice.

His son Skandagupta, who succeeded him about the year 454, at an unknown date subjugated a tribe called Pushyasmitra. But at the beginning of his reign he had to face the same catastrophe which was simultaneously threatening Europe, in the form of Hun invasion. This devastating menace to civilization poured in two streams from the steppes of Central Asia. One body went westward and fought their way through the Eastern Roman Empire and across the Rhine into Gaul. The remaining hordes, known as the White Huns, turned south and burst into India through the north-western passes. Western Europe was saved at Chalons in 451 by the allied armies of Romans and Visigoths; and some years after this date Skandagupta, by a great victory over the Hun invaders of India, postponed the impending disaster to his empire.

It would seem from inscriptions<sup>2</sup> that for nearly fifteen years the country was at peace, although the debasement of the coinage in latter years discloses the financial difficulties of the government. In about 465 the Huns appeared again, swept the Kushans out of Kabul, and occupied Gandhara. Five years later they invaded India for the second time and overthrew the empire. What was left of the dominions of the Guptas split up into petty kingdoms, and the last representative of the dynasty reigned in Magadha at the beginning of the eighth century.

The Hun leader in India was Toramana, and he rapidly established

<sup>1</sup> See *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, B. Prasad, pp. 174-176, for a summary of Yajnavalkya's principles.

<sup>2</sup> Detailed in *Early History of India*, pp. 268, 269.

himself in the north and west,<sup>1</sup> before his death in about 510. His son Mihiragula, who is known in Indian tradition as a revolting and bloodthirsty tyrant, succeeded him, and made Sakala (Chuniot or Shahkot) his Indian capital. But the Hun domination, with its savage cruelty, was of short duration. About the year 528 Mihiragula was defeated by a confederacy of Hindu princes under Baladitya (possibly Narasimhagupta), King of Magadha, and Yasedharman, a Central Indian raja; and the country was cleared of the invaders, with the exception of some settlements in the north, which were dealt with later by the kings of Kanauj and Thanesar.<sup>2</sup> Nor did the dominion of the White Huns last long in Central Asia. Sometime between 560-570 Khusra Anushirvan, King of Persia, joined forces with the Turkish tribes and destroyed this peril to civilization in the East.

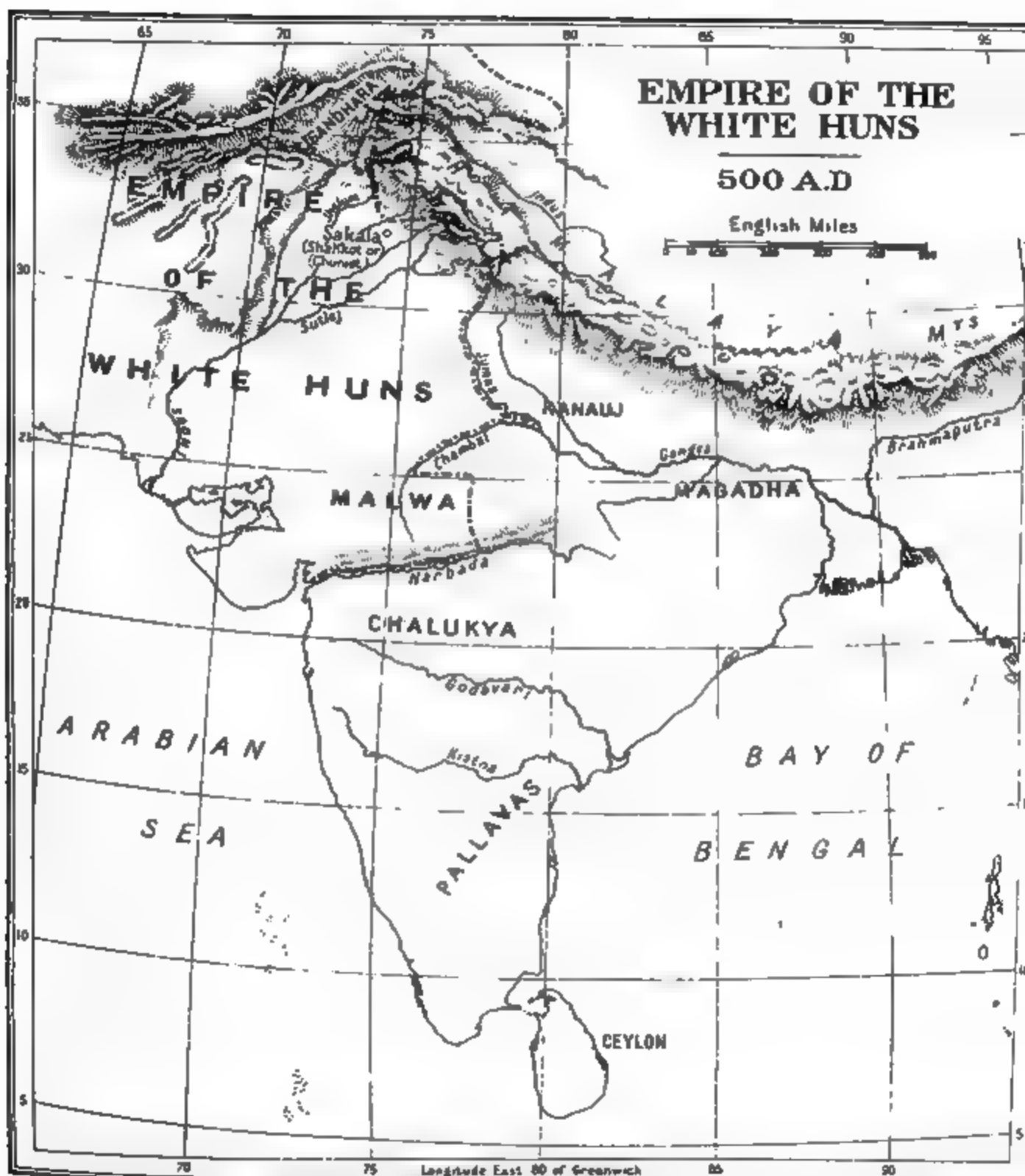
The remainder of the sixth century is an absolute blank in the history of India. But in 606 an event, destined to be of the greatest importance, took place when a youth of sixteen, named Harsha-var dhana, became ruler of the State of Thanesar.

Harsha at once began, deliberately and systematically, to make himself master of Northern India. His father, Prabhakara-var dhana, who was possibly a Vaisya Rajput<sup>3</sup> and through his mother had Gupta blood in his veins, had made his State a power by successful war with the Huns and with his neighbours. Harsha consequently had at his command a formidable army of 5000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry with which to realize the traditional Kshatriya dream of bringing the whole country, as far as possible, "under one umbrella." With this force of three arms, chariots being regarded as obsolete, Harsha brought the "Five Indias," stated to have been Svarashtra

<sup>1</sup> For inscriptions showing the progress of the Hun invasion see *Early History of India*, footnotes 1 and 2 to p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Aphsad inscription. See *Harsha*, R. Mookerji, pp. 13 (footnote) and 51.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham's opinion, quoted by Walters, who, however, observes that the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yuan-chwang, with ample opportunities for learning the antecedents of the royal family, states that Harsha belonged to the Vaisya caste. (See *Yuan-chwang*, Walters, Vol. I. pp. 343-345.)





(Punjab), Kanyakubja, Ganda (Bengal), Mithila (Darbhanga) and Orissa, under his allegiance. In six years,<sup>1</sup> "while the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted," he conquered the northern plains from the Sutlej to the Hugli, and Central India to the banks of the Chambal and the Narbada; while away to the east Kamarupa (Assam) acknowledged his supremacy. In the north the most powerful State was Kashmir, whose ruler was overlord of a considerable part of the Western Punjab. This king was a Buddhist, and the only recorded intercourse between him and Harsha is the forcible removal by the latter of a tooth relic of Buddha when he came on pilgrimage to Kashmir to see it, the relic being subsequently enshrined at Kanauj. With China Harsha maintained friendly relations, sending a Brahman envoy to the Chinese court in 641 to open the exchange of embassies. Yuan-Chwang, who visited Harsha in Kanauj city during his travels in India between 629-645, states that when he had enlarged his territory he increased his army, bringing the elephant corps up to 60,000 and the cavalry to 100,000, and reigned in peace for thirty years without raising a weapon; a way of putting an army on a peace footing which recalls the Roman proverb and the methods of King Solomon.

Harsha met with only one check in his victorious career. The feudatory princes under him had optimistically represented that "the Saka realm is but a rabbit's track, the Deccan easily won at the price of valour," but the powerful kingdom of the south, ruled by Pulikesin II, greatest of the Chalukya kings, was too strong for him. The battle between the suzerains of Northern and Southern India took place on the border between their respective dominions, the banks of the river Narbada, and Harsha was completely defeated. The issue was apparently decided by Pulikesin's great superiority in elephants,<sup>2</sup> in spite of Harsha's troops drawn from "the Five Indias

<sup>1</sup> The reasons for believing that Harsha's continuous wars of conquests were concluded by 612, and the authorities for the statement, are given by Mookerji in a footnote to pp. 36, 37 of *Harsha*. But see *Early History of India*, pp. 286, 289, where Harsha is said to have engaged in thirty-seven years of warfare before he sheathed his sword, and the war with Pulikesin is dated about 620. There is no difference of opinion about the Ganjam campaign of 643.

<sup>2</sup> Walters, Vol. II. p. 239.

and the best generals from all countries." Yuan-Chwang informs us that Pulikesin's elephants were doped before battle and that the troops were issued with the Maharashtran equivalent to a rum ration, which made them invincible.

The only recorded result of the battle, beyond Harsha's abandonment of a southern invasion, was the assumption of a second title by the victor. Harsha fought his last campaign in Kongoda (Ganjam) in the year 643, and annexed this territory. He died about five years later.

The deities of Harsha's family were Siva and the Sun, but, like the greatest of the Maurya emperors, he became a Buddhist. Asoka's religion had been of the simplest, but Harsha was an enthusiastic follower of the Mahayana sect, and in addition to what may be called his missionary tours through his dominions, eagerly pressed his Chinese visitor Yuan-Chwang into the service of propaganda.

The Buddhist monk has recorded of Harsha<sup>1</sup>: "He was just in his administration and punctilious in the discharge of his duties. . . . He was indefatigable, and the day was too short for him. The king's day was divided into three periods—one to affairs of government and two to religious works. . . . He caused the use of animal food to cease throughout the Five Indias and he prohibited the taking of life under severe penalties. He erected thousands of topes, . . . and established travellers' rest-houses all through his dominions, which were provided with food and drink, doctors being appointed to them, who supplied medicine free to the poor. Harsha also built Buddhist monasteries at sacred places.<sup>2</sup> He regularly held the quinquennial convocation and gave away in religious alms everything except the material of war. . . . At the royal lodges every day viands were provided for 1000 Buddhist monks and 500 Brahmans." Harsha, even on his administrative progresses, when he had only a greenwood hut to live in, kept up considerable state,

<sup>1</sup> Walters, Vol. I. pp. 343, 345.

<sup>2</sup> Mookerji, basing his calculations on Rhys Davids, estimates a total of 5000 monasteries and 212,130 Buddhist monks (of all sects) in India during Harsha's reign. (*Harsha*, pp. 124-127.) However inaccurate, Yuan-Chwang's census demonstrates the still surviving strength of Buddhism at the time.



and like Chandragupta Maurya was accompanied by his women attendants. The *Harsha Charita* of Bana,<sup>1</sup> the court poet who wrote a biography of his master, tells us that with his "necklace of pearls and other ornaments he looked like a jewel mountain with its outstretched wings of jewels spread on both sides."

The offices of the chief councillors of State seem to have been the same as in the Maurya administration, although  
*Civil Administration.* the rank of the ministers appears to have been that of chiefs and feudatory rulers. The State revenue was mainly derived from one-sixth of the produce of the crown lands, other sources including light octroi and ferry dues, and a percentage on goods sold. Yuan-Chwang observes that families were not registered, and taxation was very light. Land settlement was clearly defined, with government surveyors and arbitrators to assess the revenue. All government officials were paid in grants of land and not in money. Public works were carried out by conscripted labour, for which payment was made.<sup>2</sup>

For treason the sentence was imprisonment for life which, in the conditions of the times, might mean death by  
*Penal Code.* starvation. Lesser offences were punished by mutilation or banishment; and in minor cases fines were imposed. In addition to the ordinary procedure Yuan-Chwang mentions trial by ordeal.<sup>3</sup>

Buddhism, although losing its hold, was still a vital force. The  
*Religion.* great university of Nalanda, with its six-storied monasteries and thousands of inmates, gave the students who entered it free education, board, lodging, bedding and medicines out of the income of its estates.<sup>4</sup> One of the chief strongholds of Buddhism at the time was Sind, then under a Sudra king. But many of the great monasteries in Central and North-Eastern India, even the splendid buildings of Sanchi itself, were deserted and falling into decay.

Brahmanism was the religion of the mass of the people; and the

<sup>1</sup> From which this account is largely taken.

<sup>2</sup> Walters, Vol. I. pp. 176, 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Harsha*, pp. 129-132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 172.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

Vedanta was studied by scholars in the forest retreats of the hermits. The most popular deities were Vishnu, Siva and the Sun. Yuan-Chwang noticed temples dedicated to all three at Kanyakubja, then a centre of both Brahmanism and Buddhism. Benares, in those days as it is now, was the most important place of Siva worship; and there were many other Hindu temples in different parts of the country.

Sea voyages were common in the reign of Harsha, and ocean-going vessels, taking 200 passengers, were accustomed to ply between Tamralipti on the Orissa coast and Java, by way of Ceylon. The plantation of self-contained Indian colonies in Java, from the ports of Gujerat on the western seaboard, began in about 603. This migration had a strong influence upon the art, and the sculpture in particular, of that country until the fourteenth century, when it was ended by Muhammadan invasion; and the same Indian influence survived in Cambodia until the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup>

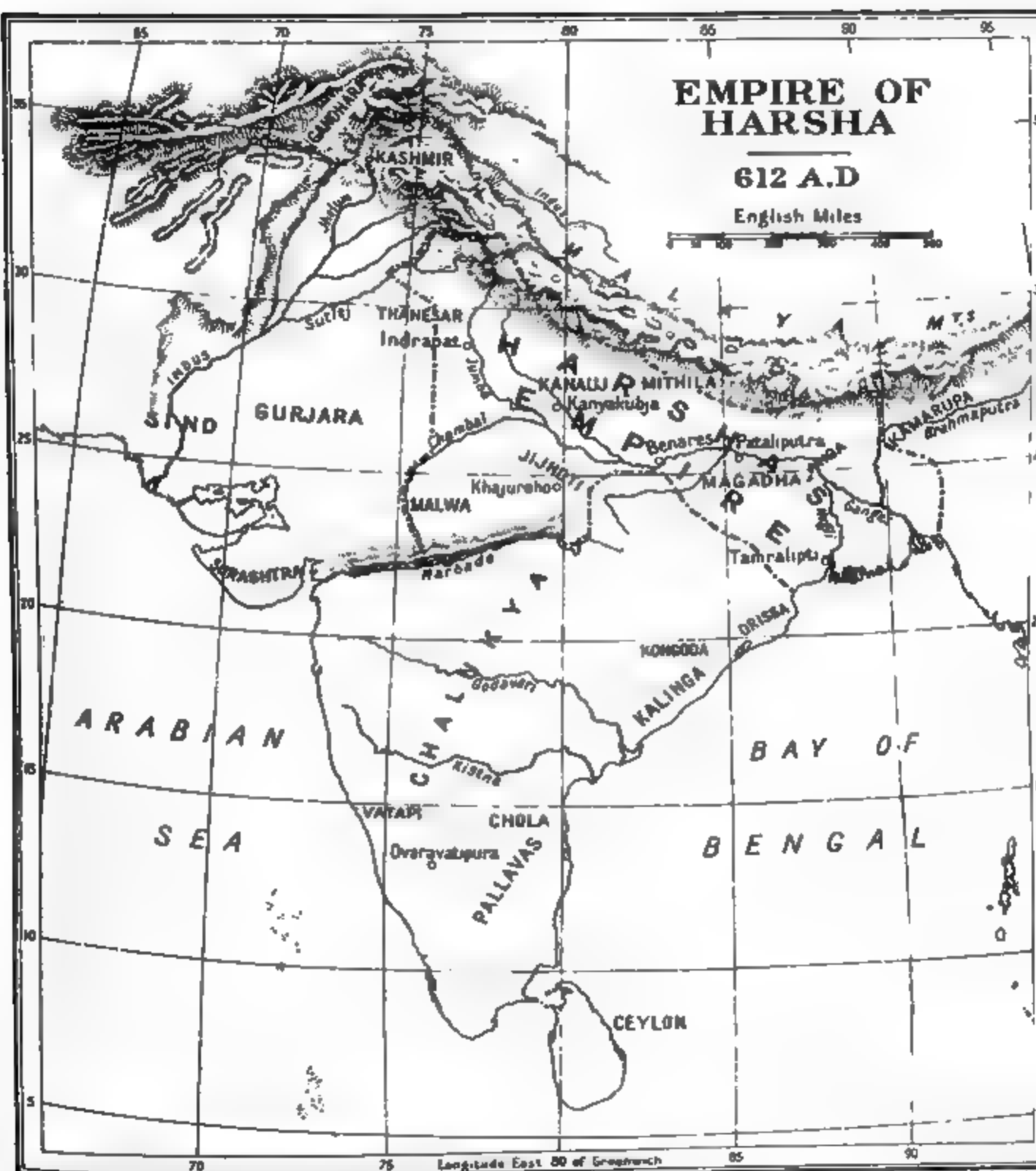
The reigns of the Guptas and Harshavardhana, that is to say between the fifth and the seventh centuries, cover the greatest period in Hindu culture.

In technical literature the metrical Code of Manu, the most important of all the Sanskrit law books, had probably taken its present form not much later than A.D. 200.<sup>2</sup> The great epic, the *Mahabharata*, with which that code is closely connected, was certainly completed by the middle of the fifth century,<sup>3</sup> if not more than a hundred years earlier at the beginning of the Gupta era; while during this period the earlier Puranas, the literature which deals with the creation, the exploits of gods and heroes, the genealogies of solar and lunar kings, and the conduct of religious duties, were recast into the shape they are today. Bana's *Harsha Charita* gives a flowing and poetical account of Harsha's

<sup>1</sup> *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, Coomaraswamy, pp. 66-72.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 428. G. C. Haughton's edition (1825) in 2 vols.—Vol. I. the Sanskrit version, Vol. II. the English translation by Sir W. Jones.

<sup>3</sup> For full examination of evidence as to dates, see Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's *Collected Works*, Vol. I. pp. 79-93.





## EARLY HINDU INDIA

life, but it cannot be called historical biography. No definitely historical work appears in Sanskrit literature until the *Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir* was written in 1148.

The technical works mentioned above, all of them of the highest importance, had been the growth of centuries, but in the realm of poetry and the drama this period can claim for its own the greatest of all Indian poets.

*Kalidasa and  
the Drama.*

Indian drama developed from the "song and dance" performances of strolling players into the religious plays representing the history of Krishna and Vishnu; and plays were certainly being acted when Pantajali wrote his *Mahabhashya*.

By the Gupta period the theatre had become the amusement of the princes and nobles. The performances were given at the palaces before aristocratic audiences, by highly competent companies, who relied on practically no scenery and only the simplest of stage properties. After an overture on flutes and other instruments by the orchestra, the manager, acting as *compère*, and the leading lady would open with a scene like a sketch in a modern revue, by way of prologue. The play followed, with its dialogue interspersed with songs and ballet.

The greatest of the Indian plays were all written from about the beginning of the fifth to the end of the eighth century A.D., and by far the most celebrated of these dramatists is Kalidasa, who in all probability lived in Malwa at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>1</sup> Three of his plays have been preserved, the *Sakuntala* (The Fatal Ring), *Vikramorvasi* (Urvashi won by Valour) and *Malavikagnimitra* (Malavika and Agnimitra), and they justly entitle their author to a place amongst the greatest of dramatists. His plays are full of beautiful lyrics, while in "The Cloud Messenger" and "The Four Seasons" Kalidasa has written the two most perfect lyric poems in Sanskrit. In the artificial epic poetry of India (*kavya*, or Court Epics), with its rigid rules of construction, Kalidasa produced the two most famous examples.<sup>2</sup> While Kalidasa stands pre-eminent in the romantic drama, with its tenderness and depth of feeling, there

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History of India*, pp. 158-159 with footnote

<sup>2</sup> For Kalidasa's works see *Sanskrit Literature*, Chs. XI., XII., for reference to his influence on Goethe, see *Life of Goethe*, J. G. Robertson, p. 214.

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is a sixth-century play of dramatic action and vigour which must be noticed. This is "The Clay Cart,"<sup>1</sup> attributed to a royal patron but possibly written by Dandin, a celebrated poet of the sixth century. The monologue of the enterprising burglar in the third act, in which he feels he must do something "to astonish the natives," is excellent humour in a play which combines comic situations and serious drama. No real tragedy or a death scene is permissible on the Indian stage.

But this, the highest form of the dramatic art of India, dwindled with the Muhammadan invasions into mystery plays on the village greens and the nautch dancing still to be seen at weddings and other festivals and in the temples.

One of the most important works on astronomy was written in the fourth century A.D., and this was put into concise and practical form by Aryabhata, who was born, as he states himself, at Pataliputra in A.D. 476. He maintained the rotation of the earth round its axis and explained the causes of eclipses of the sun and moon. The early Indian astronomers, in the chapters they give to algebra, reach a far higher standard than anything ever attempted by the Greeks.<sup>2</sup>

In the Kushana and later Andhra period of art (A.D. 50-320) sculpture was massive and primitive. But in the Gupta period which followed, taste had been definitely created and types and compositions were now standardized in forms whose influence extended far beyond the Ganges Valley. This influence spread not only throughout India and Ceylon, but well outside the confines of India proper, and survives to the present day.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the Gupta period we find the earliest examples of Hindu temples, decorated with carved bricks. These early stone temples, planned to resemble saitya caves, were barrel-roofed buildings, built with an apse. The

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the early drama and the modern development of the Indian stage under European influences see *The Indian Theatre*, R. K. Yajnik (Allen & Unwin), 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 434, 435

<sup>3</sup> *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, A. K. Coomaraswamy, pp. 71, 72; and see *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, V. A. Smith, revised by K. de B. Codrington.

## EARLY HINDU INDIA

entrances to the Mahayana halls of about A.D. 500 are elaborately ornamented with figures of Buddha and rose-lotus decorations, while the interiors are painted.

At the great university at Nalanda in South Bihar, founded about the year 470, the monastery buildings were six storeys high, and the great brick temple rose to a height of over three hundred feet, with richly adorned towers and turrets. Yuan-Chwang has described it "with its dragon-like projections, coloured eaves, pearl-red pillars carved and ornamented, richly adorned balustrades and roofs covered with shining tiles."

But with the death of Harsha the golden age came to an end. His minister Arjuna, who usurped the throne, was utterly incompetent to keep the empire together. His first act was to murder the escort to the Chinese embassy under Wang-hiuen-tse which had just reached the court, the envoys themselves escaping to Nepal. Wang-hiuen-tse returned with a combined force of Nepalese and Tibetans and, aided by Kumara, King of Assam, the feudatory and personal friend of the late emperor, the allies completely defeated Arjuna, who was sent as a prisoner to China.<sup>1</sup> The country which Harsha had ruled so firmly and well relapsed once more into the chaos of endless war between petty States.

In the hopeless confusion of the next five hundred years, kingdoms occasionally emerged under strong and determined rulers, none of whom, however, were powerful enough to found an empire and turn chaos into coherent history.

The arts were still encouraged at various courts, especially temple architecture. Temples were built in honour of all three religions, but there are no Buddhist, Jainist or Brahmanical styles of architecture; they all were built in the Indian style of their respective periods. Sculpture remained at a high level, and the latest and best paintings at Ajanta belong to the eighth century.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the medieval period of art,

<sup>1</sup> *Early History of India*, pp. 298-299, gives a full account of the incident.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ajanta* (published under the special authority of H.E.H. The Nizam, Oxford University Press, 1931-1934), a magnificent publication with many reproductions in colour.

in about the ninth century, the brick temple of Laksmana, unsurpassed in the richness and refinement of its ornament, was built at Sirpur; and the magnificent temples of Orissa and at Khajuraho, were built about the year 1000.

Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and other present-day languages were forming to give birth to the vernacular literatures.

The history of the Deccan <sup>1</sup> from about 550 to 750 centres upon the fortunes of the Chalukyas, a line of kings possibly of Hun origin, who had settled in Gujarat and become Rajputs. Their greatest representative, Pulikesin II, greatly enlarged his kingdom of Vatapi at the expense of his neighbours until, as the most powerful ruler south of the Narbada, he repelled the invading armies of Harsha. In the course of his victorious career Pulikesin drove the Pallava king of Kanchi out of the country between the Kistna and Godavari rivers, and so began a conflict of alternating fortunes which resulted in his defeat and death in 642. The rule of the Chalukyas ended for the time being about the middle of the eighth century when Dantidurga of the ancient Indian family of the Rashtrakutas came down from the Maharashtra country and overthrew Kirttivarmana II. The overlordship of the Deccan then passed into Rashtrakuta hands for more than two centuries. The famous rock-cut shrine of Kailasa at Ellora was made during the reign of Krishna I, the second of their kings.

In 973 the Chalukyas came into their own again, and the last of the Rashtrakutas was dethroned by Tailapa II, founder of the second Chalukya dynasty. Tailapa succeeded in regaining most of the old territory of his house, and his descendants ruled at Kalyani for over two hundred years. But simultaneously with the overthrow of the Rashtrakutas and the return of the Chalukya dynasty, a powerful and aggressive State, the kingdom of the Cholas, arose south of the Kistna to make a bid for supremacy in the south and west of the Deccan. The succession of frontier wars between these two equally matched States was begun by the greatest Chola king, Rajaraja the Great, who invaded the Chalukya country about the year

<sup>1</sup> For further details see Ch. XV of the *Early History of India*, V. A. Smith.



1000 and annexed a large part of what is now Mysore. Rajaraja had already made considerable conquests in the south, and subsequently extended his sovereignty over Kalinga and Ceylon. But about the year 1080, in the reign of the enlightened King Vikramaditya Chalukya, Rajaraja's conquests in Mysore were won back from the Cholas.

The Chalukya kings of Kalyani continued to hold their supremacy until they were crushed between their former feudatories the Hoysalas of Dvaravatipura and the Yadavas of Deogir before the middle of the twelfth century. The Cholas were themselves overthrown about the year 1220 by the Pandians of Madura, by which date their supremacy had passed away; for the Chola-Pandya hostilities had, as one of its results, the dominance of the Hoysala power above the other warring states, under their greatest King Vira Ballala II. From the chieftainship of a small hill tribe in the Western Ghats the Hoysala family had risen in just under two hundred years to the paramount position in the Deccan. They achieved this in 1192 after a succession of conquests which concluded with the defeat of the Yadavas. Their supremacy, however, was brief. Shaken to pieces by Muhammadan invasion in 1310, when the capital Dvaravatipura was sacked, the kingdom was wiped out on the return of their conquerors sixteen years later.

In the country between the Narbada and the Jumna the Chandel kings of Jijhoti enjoyed for about three centuries a less chequered existence than their neighbours to the north and south. Early in the ninth century they had established themselves as a state to be reckoned with south of the Jumna; and between the years 950 and 1050 they built the groups of magnificent Hindu and Jainist temples at their capital of Khajuraho. After the Moslem invasion the Chandel dynasty continued to reign as feudatories of the Ghaznavids until, after an unsuccessful revolt, the kingdom was annexed in 1203 by the Muhammadans.

Further to the north Kanauj once more found a strong ruler in Bhoja (Mihira Parihar), a Rajput chief who usurped the throne and created a powerful kingdom which he ruled for nearly fifty years, until his death about 890. His descendants were still kings of

*The Pala  
Dynasty.*

Kanauj when Mahmud of Ghazni made his descent upon Northern India.

The country we now know as Bengal felt to the full the anarchy which swept over Northern India after the break up of Harsha's empire. But in about 750 the people in sheer desperation elected a king to restore peace and security. In choosing a Buddhist named Gopala they made a fortunate choice, for his son Dharmapala, second king of the Pala dynasty, proved himself to be a strong ruler and a successful soldier, who made himself master of much of Northern India about the beginning of the ninth century. The dynasty met with various vicissitudes of fortune, but it succeeded in surviving until there came upon it that inevitable ending to all the kingdoms north of the Deccan, destruction by Muhammadan invasion before the middle of the thirteenth century.

But the fortunes of ambitious princes in Hindustan and in the Deccan during this time of confusion of States and distress of the people are of little historical importance. The centre of interest had long since moved from Pataliputra and Ajodhya, the later capital of the Guptas, to Kanauj; it now comes still further west and is focused upon Rajputana, Sind and the Punjab.

This wide belt of territory on the west is to India what eastern England and parts of Scotland are to the rest of Great Britain, the zone which has been exposed in the past to foreign raids and more permanent invasion. The inhabitants are therefore of mixed descent, and the people of Southern India, like the inhabitants of the western fringe of England and the Principality of Wales, are the descendants of the earlier owners of the soil.

Broadly speaking, the Rajput clans represent the old Kshatriya order of Indo-Aryan society, with whom Brahmins had to some slight extent intermarried. By tradition the Rajputs claim descent, as Suryavamsa, Chaudravamsa and Agni-kula, from the Sun, the Moon, and the Sacrificial Fire. The Rajputs, among the hills and valleys of their country remote from the rich plains, are to India what the Highlanders are to Scotland, a proud people boasting a common origin with their chiefs, sudden and quick

in quarrel, and split up into clans, which never could unite to form a kingdom. The minor Rajput baron, "with a pedigree as long as his sword and a sword as long as the village street," held his fief on military tenure. The Rajputs showed to their women a respect unusual in the East, and for their enemies a chivalry unsurpassed in the annals of history. The women of the race jealously guarded a tradition which matched the courage of their men. In the face of irretrievable disaster, as at Manaich when besieged by Mahmud of Ghazni, they could show that their spirit at least was unconquerable in the terrible rite of *jauhar*, when the women and children destroyed themselves by fire while the defenders of the place rushed out in saffron robes upon the enemy, sword in hand, to die to a man.

But not all of the Rajput clans are of Indo-Aryan origin. A number of the most distinguished clan-castes of Rajputana are descended from the upper class of later invaders of India, such as the Gurjaras and White Huns, who, it must be noted, were a tall fair race and unlike the debased people who tried to conquer Europe. These foreigners became absorbed in the country they subdued, and established themselves amongst the true Kshatriyas in what are now Rajputana and Gujerat, the district which is named after the most powerful of the clans of Saka stock. From one of these, the Parihar sept of the Gurjaras, came the line of kings who captured Kanauj about the year 840 and transferred their capital from Bhilmal to the imperial city of Harsha, while Rajput dynasties rose to power in Malwa and Bundelkhand.

*Approximate  
Dates*

CHRONOLOGY

B.C.	
135.	Saka invasion of Bactria.
70.	Yueh-chi conquered Bactria.
58.	Azes I Saka conquered Euthydemian kingdom of Eastern Punjab.
25.	Pahlava conquest of Kabul.
A.D.	
19-50.	Gondopharnes "King of India."
50.	Yueh-chi (Kushanas) took South Afghanistan and began conquest of N.W. India.

A.D.	
c. 78.	V'ima Khadphises Kushana reigned in Taxila.
c. 89.	Foundation of Kushan Empire.
150.	Rudraman the Western satrap defeated the Andhras.
180.	Decline of the Andhra power.
226.	Death of Vasudeva Kushana and break up of Kushan Empire.
318-319.	Accession of Chandragupta I. Rise of Gupta Empire.
326-375.	Samudragupta.
340.	Campaign in Southern India.
375-411.	Chandragupta II.
388-401.	End of the Western satraps.
400-450.	Kalidasa, poet and dramatist.
411-454.	Kumaragupta I.
454.	Skandagupta. First appearance of the White Huns in N.W. India.
465.	White Huns took Kabul and occupied Gandhara.
470.	Torama and the White Huns conquered N.W. India.
528.	Confederacy of Indian kings defeated the White Huns under Mihiragula.
550.	Rise of Chalukya dynasty in the Deccan.
560-570.	Khusru Anushirvan King of Persia destroyed the White Huns.
606.	Harsha-var dhana became King of Thanesar.
612.	Conquered Northern India, but was defeated in his invasion of South India by Pulikesin II.
609-665	Pulikesin II. Chalukya.
622.	The year of the Hijra. Flight of the Prophet Muhammad to Medina.
648.	Death of Harsha and break up of his Empire.

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(This work should be consulted for authoritative information on Indian art through the ages. Chapter X. is devoted to southern or Dravidian architecture from the period of the Seven Pagodas of the Pahlava kings.)

## CHAPTER IV

### Pre-Mogul Muhammadan Rule

PREVIOUS invasions had come from the north-west, but the first warning to India of the storm which swept across Asia, North Africa and Southern Europe about the beginning of the eighth century was to fall upon Sind.

When we consider the overwhelming success of the Muhammadan conquerors of India, it must be borne in mind what took place in the west. As Sir Wolsely Haig points out,<sup>1</sup> the rise of Islam is one of the marvels of history, and the relentless force of its expansion by the sword was almost irresistible. In A.D. 622 a prophet, unable to gather together more than a dozen disciples, fled from his native city of Mecca to what is now known as Medina. Little more than a century later the successors and followers of the fugitive were ruling an empire which extended from the Atlantic to Afghanistan and from the Caspian to the Cataracts of the Nile.

By the beginning of the eighth century the Arabs had carried the banners of the Prophet into Gedrosia, the modern Baluchistan; and an act of piracy by nominal subjects of Dahir, the Brahman king of Sind, who had ousted the Saka ruler of the country, led to the Arab invasion in 711 by the youthful Muhammad Qasim.

Muhammad, with his heavy siege engines to support his picked troops, took one fortified town after another. By the year 712 he had penetrated into the heart of Sind, where he met Dahir in a pitched battle. The Hindu king was killed, his army was routed, and the victor organized the government of Lower Sind under local administrators. In 713 he advanced upon Multan and took it.

The Arabs now were in possession of Sind and the Lower Punjab,

<sup>1</sup> *Camb Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 1.

and their conquest marks a new stage in Muhammadan policy. The Koran lays down that Christians and Jews on account of their inspired scriptures belong to a more favoured class than other "unbelievers." Consequently when conquered their lives should be spared and their religion tolerated so long as they made their submission and paid a poll tax, while the early interpretation of the Koran allowed to other unbelievers only the choice between Islam and death. But the conquest of Sind was not a holy war, and Muhammad's policy of arousing as little general hostility as possible led him to apply to Damascus for an amnesty to Hindus, which spared their temples and allowed them religious freedom.

The religion of Islam reduced to its simplest terms consists of the formula "There is one God and Muhammad is his Prophet," while its beliefs are bounded by the Shari'at, the sum total of the natural, ethical and social laws taught by its founder. The Moslem sects differ only in their interpretation of these laws, which are binding on the whole Muhammadan world.

The control exercised by the Caliphs of Baghdad over their Indian dependancy gradually weakened. In 871 it practically disappeared altogether with the creation of two independent States under chiefs of the Prophet's own tribe of the Koreish at Multan and Mansurah.

The Arabs made no serious attempt to break the power of the Rajput kings to the north and east, and their conquest of Sind and the Lower Punjab left the rest of India untouched. Their authority was supported by Arab soldier-colonists who settled down and made local marriages, while the actual administration was largely left in the hands of the people of the country and the taxation of the Hindu population was eminently fair. Invasion of a very different character was to descend upon India with Mahmud of Ghazni and his Turki armies.

The rise of the Turks to power is a remarkable story. To make their own position secure from the growing Persian influence and the risk of Arab revolt, the Caliphs of Baghdad formed a personal guard of Turki slaves captured in war. But the Turki guard gradually acquired the chief

*Rise of the  
Ghaznavids.*

offices of State, got control of the provinces and, becoming the masters of the Caliph, made the Turkish race predominant throughout the Moslem world.

The occupation by slaves of the highest positions in the State occurs over and over again in the history of Moslem India. The enslavement of the vanquished in war was in those days the only alternative to wholesale massacre, and the Koran laid down that slaves who say their prayers (*i.e.* embrace Islam) are brothers and must be clothed and fed as their masters, with permission to ransom themselves if they were in a position to do so. Moreover, if a slave woman bore a child to her master, the child was free and the mother emancipated, which contrasts favourably with conditions in the American plantations many centuries later.

By the end of the tenth century Islam had lost its political unity. The power had slipped from the hands of the Arabian successors of Muhammad and was now divided amongst a number of independent dynasties to whom the Caliph at Baghdad was simply the spiritual head.

One of these independent states was Ghazni, to whose throne a slave called Sabuktigin succeeded in 977. This ruler rapidly enlarged his kingdom to the Oxus on the north, the present frontier of Persia on the west, and after two successful campaigns against Jaipal, the Hindu king of the Punjab, took from him, in 988, an extent of territory which included Kabul. Six years later he was given the governorship of Khorasan (Eastern Persia) by the ruler of Bokhara. Sabuktigin died in 997 and a year later his younger son Ismail, who had succeeded him, was dethroned by his elder brother Mahmud.

*Invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni*
 Mahmud was twenty-seven when he took over the kingdom which his father had built up, and in the following year he added the province of Sistan to his dominions. The Caliph al-Qadir Billah formally recognized his sovereignty, conferring on him the title of Yamin-ud-Daula, from which Mahmud's successors are known in the East as the Yamini dynasty. It was then that Mahmud is said to have vowed to make a yearly expedition to carry the Crescent in a holy war into India. These campaigns cannot be followed with certainty, but there were



not less than twelve of them, and they may have numbered as many as seventeen.

Mahmud had not to deal with a united empire in Northern India, but with a number of States too suspicious of each other, and even hostile, to offer the resistance of more than a brief and half-hearted alliance. Apart from the small Brahman State of Und on the Indus, which was immediately obliterated, the fury of the Moslem storm fell upon the kingdom of the Punjab, whose capital was Bhatinda. Its kings, Jaipal I, Anandpal, Jaipal II and Bhimpal the Fearless, bravely but fruitlessly resisted Mahmud's invasions. But the end came in 1021, and Bhimpal had to take refuge in Ajmer.

The first invasion took place in 1001. Mahmud with a force of 15,000 cavalry advanced on Peshawar, where, at the end of November he found Jaipal barring the way with an army of 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 infantry, and 300 elephants. The Indian troops were routed by the Muhammadan cavalry, with a loss of 15,000 killed, and Jaipal was taken prisoner. After the Punjab king's release on ransom he abdicated in favour of his son Anandpal, and, overwhelmed with the shame of defeat, perished on a funeral pyre.

The next few years were spent by Mahmud in minor expeditions and in settling a revolt on the Oxus where, it is interesting to note, an Indian contingent formed part of his army. But in 1008 he came down into India to crush Anandpal. The Punjab king, with his allies the rulers of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmer, had concentrated the Indian forces to the west of Und. Instead of adopting his former tactics of an impetuous attack, Mahmud took up a defensive position, entrenched his flanks, and for forty days awaited the Indian assault.

It came on the last day of the year, and opened with flank attacks by 30,000 hillmen who carried the Muhammadan trenches. Mahmud's defeat seemed certain when Anandpal's elephant took fright and bolted from the battlefield. The Indian troops, seeing the flight of their leader, broke in disorder, and the Muhammadans won a complete victory. Mahmud pressed on to Kangra, the treasure-house of North-Western India, plundered it and returned with an enormous booty to Ghazni.

Year after year, during the cold weather, invasion followed invasion, and Mahmud went back into his mountain fastnesses laden with plunder and carrying off with his army immense numbers of prisoners to be sold in Ghazni as slaves. Thanesar, the holy city of Muttra, and Kanauj the Hindu centre of India, all fell into the hands of the Muhammadans, and after the raid of 1018-19, when 53,000 captives, 380 elephants and an enormous quantity of treasure were taken, Mahmud founded in Ghazni the great mosque of marble and granite called the "Bride of Heaven" and the college which was attached to it.

With the exception of the campaign of 1021, when Bhimpal was defeated and the Punjab annexed, all Mahmud's military operations had up to this time been either to strengthen his rule on the Oxus and at Multan, or to storm through Northern India bent on plunder and the destruction of temples. But in 1024 he started on his most celebrated expedition, crossed the great India desert with 30,000 camels to carry water for his troops, and took Somnath. The Hindus offered a stout resistance and disputed with the greatest courage every yard of the streets leading to the great temple where a thousand Brahmans served at its shrine and guarded its almost incalculable treasures. Fifty thousand Indians lay dead in Somnath before the temple was taken, rifled of its gold and its jewels, and the great stone *linga* broken into pieces. It was not until the spring of 1026 that Mahmud's army returned with its spoils to Ghazni.

In the autumn of the same year Mahmud made his last expedition into India, against the Jats of the Sind-Sagar Doab who had harassed his retirement from Somnath. He defeated them in a naval engagement on the Indus, in which he employed 1400 boats fitted with spikes and armed his crews with bows and arrows and naphtha hand-grenades. Mahmud died at Ghazni in 1030.

It is not possible to regard him as a king of India, although he founded a dynasty which ruled the Punjab for a century and a half. The Punjab was not annexed until late in his reign, and all his interests were centred in his capital of Ghazni. But by his desecration and ruin of Hindu temples he sowed the seeds of hatred and religious bitterness

*Mahmud's  
Character.*

between Hindus and Moslems. The communal feuds of today have their origin in the acts of Mahmud of Ghazni.<sup>1</sup>

Mahmud's incessant raids into India and the appalling massacres which accompanied them were no doubt inspired by his zeal for Islam, for he was a devout and iconoclastic believer; but he certainly looked upon India in the light of an inexhaustible source of plunder rather than a new world to conquer and rule, and attracted to his standards thousands of volunteers eager to share the spoil, from the steppes of Central Asia.

Mahmud was the first of the great Moslem leaders who carried the Crescent into the heart of Hindustan. Not only was he a most able soldier, but he was a patron of the arts who enriched his capital with many noble buildings, and he attracted to his court of Ghazni a number of poets, the greatest of whom was Firdausi, author of the *Shah-nama*.

Chief among the scholars and men of letters surrounding Mahmud was Abu-Rihan Muhammad, familiarly known as Al-Beruni (the foreigner). This most gifted scientist and man of letters had been brought to Ghazni as a hostage or a prisoner, from his home in Khiva, by Mahmud. After the annexation of the Punjab he spent some time there, mastered Sanskrit, made a close study of Hindu philosophy and science, and wrote a book usually referred to as "Al-Beruni's India," on the history and customs of the Hindus, which, as Vincent Smith observes, is unique in Moslem literature. From what survives of his treatises on a wide range of subjects, including astronomy and physics, Al-Beruni was undoubtedly a scientist of the very first rank. He died in 1048 at the age of seventy-five.

With all his reputation for avarice, Mahmud founded a university and a library, he paid away large sums in pensions to men of letters and was ever lavish where his religion was concerned. He ruled his great kingdom and kept order and security with a firm hand, but, preoccupied with incessant warfare, he neglected to organize and consolidate his government, and his dominions began slowly to fall to pieces soon after his death.

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Horizon*, by the Maharajadhiraja of Burdwan, p. 13.

The succession to the throne in 1030 was a repetition of what had taken place when Mahmud deposed his younger brother. After a short struggle Mas'ud, the elder and abler of Mahmud's sons, took the kingdom from Muhammad, the younger son, to whom it had been left, and carried his ill-starred brother, blinded and a prisoner, to the temporary capital of Balkh.

Mahmud had appointed as Governor of the Punjab a Turkish officer named Ariyaruq who assumed almost independent power, retaining the bulk of the revenue, oppressing the people and refusing them access to appeal to the king. Mas'ud's first act was to remove and execute the Governor and to make an equally unfortunate appointment in his father's treasurer Ahmad Niyaltigin. He gave his Punjab officials, however, strict instructions calculated to prevent a repetition of what had happened under Ariyaruq's administration. No military expeditions beyond the Punjab border were to be made, Turkish officials were not to drink, play polo, or mix socially with the Hindu officers at Lahore, and they were to avoid unnecessary displays of religious bigotry.

Ahmad was not long in quarrelling with Abu-'l-Hasan, who had been sent on a commission of inquiry into Ariyaruq's conduct and to collect the revenue. The commissioner bluntly advised that Ahmad should confine himself to the civil administration and delegate the command of the army to a military officer. But Mas'ud supported the Governor, who in 1034 responded by leading an expedition to Benares, plundered the city and returned to Lahore with an immense booty.

Abu-'l-Hasan reported to Mas'ud that Ahmad was raising a large army in the province and was on the point of throwing off his allegiance. Mas'ud was unable to go to India in person to reassert his authority. Balkh was being threatened by the Saljuqs, the situation in Iraq was critical, and the hourly-expected death of the Caliph al-Qadir Billah was certain to bring fresh disorders. The question arose, who would bell the cat, and as the Muhammadan nobles were most reluctant to make the attempt, the Hindu Tilak stepped into the breach. The son of a barber, he had risen by sheer ability in

Mahmud's service, and after Mas'ud's accession had been appointed commander of the Hindu troops, with the rank of a noble.

Tilak at first struck ruthlessly, took Lahore, defeated and killed Ahmad and his son, and then gave a complete amnesty to the Jats who had joined the standard of the late governor. In 1036 Mas'ud made his second son Majdud governor of the Punjab, and in the following year, in spite of the danger of a Saljuq invasion of his northern and western provinces, he entered India to stamp out what was left of the rebellion. In this he was successful, but in the meantime the Saljuqs had overrun Persia and invaded Khurasan.

Mas'ud, after a fatal delay in his capital, moved to meet the enemy, was completely beaten at Taliqan near Merv in 1040 and forced to retire on Ghazni. Khurasan and Persia were lost to the Ghaznavids, and Mas'ud in panic fled from his capital to India with his harem, the brother whom he had blinded and all the treasure he could collect. But long before he could reach Lahore his guards mutinied and acclaimed his brother Muhammad as king.

Within a few months Mas'ud was murdered by a nephew, and his son Maudud hurrying down from Ghazni defeated Muhammad's troops, put that luckless prince to death by torture and was master of the Punjab by the middle of 1042. But neither he, nor the Ghaznavid kings who succeeded him, had the strength and ability of the founder of the dynasty. As early as 1044 Mahipal, raja of the city of Delhi built by his Tomara predecessor fifty years before on the site of Indrapat, invaded the Punjab. He took Hansi, Thanesar and Kangra and laid siege to Lahore, failed to take it and was forced to retire. But it was all that the Ghaznavids could do to hold the Punjab.

The Arab colonies in Sind had as little influence over the rest of India as the Persian satrapy of the Indus Valley twelve hundred years earlier. The irruptions of Mahmud from his mountain fastnesses, even though they led to the annexation of the Punjab, were a succession of raids in search of plunder, with their attendant horrors of wholesale massacre, enslavement and destruction: catastrophes which did not affect the greater part of the sub-continent. But a new era of domination by foreigners from Central Asia and

the widespread introduction of Islam was now to set in. The Muhammadan conquest of India came, like the stupendous growth of the Faith itself, from the smallest of beginnings.

In the year 1010 Mahmud, after his return from the sack of Kangra, had marched against the insignificant but independent hill State of Ghor<sup>1</sup> two hundred miles north of his capital, and forced its chief, the Persian Muhammad bin Suri, to acknowledge the overlordship of Ghazni. But the Ghaznavid kingdom grew weaker, while the rulers of Ghor strengthened their position by successful war until in 1151 the army of the vassal State descended upon Ghazni, put its defenders to the sword and burnt the city to the ground. The conflagration lasted for seven days, earning for Ala-ud-din Hussain prince of Ghor the name of Jahansuz, "The world-burner," and of all the magnificent buildings of Ghazni only the tomb of Mahmud and two minarets remained standing.

Jahansuz did not long enjoy the fruits of his victory and the revenge for his brother's death which had led to it. Shortly afterwards he fell foul of Sultan Sanjar the Saljuq and was himself defeated. Bahram the reigning Ghaznavid king thereupon regained his capital, which his successor Khusru Shah lost in 1160 to the Ghuzz tribe of Turkmans, the conquerors of Sultan Sanjar. All that now remained to the descendants of Mahmud was the Punjab. But while the Ghaznavids, in the small kingdom which was left to them, were letting their authority fall into the hands of the district governors, the princes of Ghor were again becoming formidable. Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad, nephew of Jahansuz, was now the ruler of that country and in 1173 he took Ghazni from the Ghuzz Turkmans and made his younger brother Mu'izz-ud-din Muhammad Shihab-ud-din governor of the province.

The two brothers, with a loyalty rare in the story of Moslem dynasties, exercised what was practically a joint sovereignty. Ghiyas-ud-din was content to rule the ancient patrimony of his house, while the younger brother, Muhammad Ghorî, the ruler of

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 16, footnote, gives Ghur as the correct spelling though Ghor is more usual.

Ghazni, set no bounds to his ambition, either eastward to the furthest borders of Hindustan or north-westward to the Oxus.

Muhammad Ghori's primary object was to get possession of the Muhammadan provinces in India, and in 1175 he came down from Ghazni and took Multan, the capital of the Arab colony then in the hands of Isma'ilian heretics. Expedition followed upon expedition. In 1182 the whole of Sind was subdued. Four years later the Punjab to the Sutlej was in his hands, Khusru Malik a prisoner, and the Ghaznavid dynasty at an end.

Muhammad now prepared to conquer the Hindu States of Northern India. In the cold weather of 1190-91 he invaded the kingdom of Delhi, took Bhatinda and appointed a governor over the district. But the Chauhan raja Prithvi Raj was not prepared to submit without a struggle. The country was thoroughly alarmed by this new threat of invasion, and the Rajput king, with an army reinforced by contingents from all the leading States, met Muhammad at Taraori, about thirty miles from the historic battlefield of Panipat. The Muhammadan horse made repeated charges, but they failed to shake the Hindu troops and at last, heavily outnumbered, the Moslem army broke and fled. There was no pursuit. Prithvi Raj contented himself with the investment of Bhatinda which capitulated thirteen months later.

The battle of Taraori was not Muhammad's first defeat in India. During the course of his operations in Sind the Ghori invader made an attack on Gujerat, but was beaten by Bhim the Vaghela, raja of Anhilvara. In 1180 Muhammad occupied Anhilvara, but Bhim's victory two years earlier had the effect of saving Gujarat from serious Muhammadan invasion for more than a hundred years.

In 1192 Muhammad again invaded India, determined to wipe out the defeat of the previous year. Once more he met Prithvi Raj on the field of Taraori, and this time he completely outgeneralled him. Muhammad made feint attacks upon the flanks and rear of the Hindu army until he saw his opportunity to launch his cavalry against his enemy's centre. The effect was decisive, the Hindus were completely routed and Prithvi Raj was killed. This victory gave Muhammad Northern India to the gates of Delhi, which fell into his hands at the

beginning of the new year. The victor turned south after the fight of Taraori, plundered Ajmer and carried off many of its inhabitants as slaves. But the place was too isolated for the safety of a Muhammadan governor, and Muhammad appointed a son of Prithvi Raj who undertook to pay tribute. Interesting though this none too successful arrangement was, Muhammad's appointment of Qutb-ud-din as Viceroy of his northern conquests was of infinitely greater importance.

*Qutb-ud-din Aibak.* Qutb-ud-din Aibak had in his youth been brought as a slave from Turkistan and passed eventually into the hands of Muhammad Ghori. Strong and energetic, a fine rider and a good archer, well enough educated and of lavish generosity, he had risen to the highest rank in his master's service; and Muhammad trusted him as fully as he himself was trusted by his elder brother. Such was the character of the slave who had once been sold to the local governor of Nishapur and was destined to be the real founder of Muhammadan dominion in India.

Aibak, engaged in the task of setting the government within his viceroyalty upon a firm basis, did not make many campaigns. In 1193, however, a year after he became Viceroy at Delhi, he inflicted a crushing defeat at Chandwar (Firozabad) upon the army of Jaichand the Rathor Rajput king of Kanauj. Jaichand was killed at the moment when the Moslem troops were actually wavering and the Hindu army fled in panic.

The highest authorities in the administration as it was now constituted were the Muhammadan holders of military fiefs, but Hindus were employed in the lower official grades; and there were large tracts of country still under Hindu rulers who paid tribute or taxes to the central government. Where Moslem authority was weak the Hindus regained much of their power, but on the other hand they suffered severely whenever the local governors were despotic and indulged their religious bigotry. This state of affairs lasted until the middle of the sixteenth century.

*Ikhtiyar-ud-din.* Aibak's conquests in India did not extend further east, and the general who made the Muhammadans masters of Bengal was Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad, son of Bakhtiar of the Turkish tribe of Khalj, whose country lay between



Scistan and Ghazni: a people who were to give a line of kings to India a century later, and finally emerge in history as the Ghilzais of Afghanistan. This adventurous soldier was clumsy and unprepossessing in appearance, while the length of his arms, which enabled him to touch the calves of his legs when standing upright, made him look a positive deformity. But he was resolute and energetic and he swept eastward with his army, leaving a trail of destruction behind him.

In about the year 1193 he invaded Bihar, sacked the capital Odantapuri, destroyed its great monastery and dealt Buddhism in its last stronghold a blow from which it was unable to recover. From that day the Buddhist religion was at an end in Northern India. The monks who succeeded in escaping from the massacre scattered to Nepal, Tibet and the south.

The conquest of Lower Bengal followed about the year 1202. Its capital, Nadia, had been almost deserted by the wealthier inhabitants, terrified by what they had heard of the ruthless cruelty and rapacity of the Moslems, but Lakshman the old Brahman king of the country was still in the city. Ikhtiyar-ud-din left Bihar with a strong body of cavalry and pressed on so rapidly that he arrived at Nadia with only eighteen men. Pretending to be horse-dealers, the Muhammadan general and his party made their way into the city, reached the palace and, cutting down the guards, burst into it. The king, who was eating his meal in the usual undress of a high caste Hindu, barely escaped by boat with his life. Ikhtiyar-ud-din succeeded in holding the palace until his troops appeared, when the city was plundered and destroyed. This at least is the Muhammadan version. After the sack of Nadia, Ikhtiyar-ud-din retired to Lakhnawati (Gaur), where he established himself as Governor of Bengal and began to found mosques and colleges.

At the beginning of 1203 Ghiyas-ud-din died, and his younger brother Mu'izz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, overlord of Northern India, became sole ruler of the Ghuri dominions. His Indian kingdom now extended from Sind to Eastern Bengal, and almost the whole of Northern India acknowledged his suzerainty. But

Muhammad was not satisfied. He wished to create an empire in Central Asia and, in about 1203, he invaded Khvarasm, the modern Khiva. The invasion failed and his defeat was so complete as to shake his Indian empire to its foundations. Multan threw off its allegiance, the tribes north of the Salt Range rose in revolt and Lahore was plundered by the rebels. Eager though he was to revenge his defeat at Andkhui, Muhammad came south to quell the rebellion, and with the assistance of Aibak he succeeded in re-establishing his authority early in 1206. But on his way back to Ghazni immediately afterwards, to lead a second expedition into Khvarasm, he was murdered in his tent, probably by fanatical Shiahs of the heretical Isma'ili sect.

Muhammad was an able and successful soldier, and his conquests were more extensive and far more solid than those of Mahmud, who completely overshadows him in history; and he was magnificently served by his Indian Viceroy Aibak.

Ikhtiyar-ud-din, the conqueror of Bihar and Bengal, met a like fate as his master, early in the same year but after a disastrous defeat. Governor of Bengal, it became his ambition to extend his power across the Himalaya, and in the middle of 1205 with a force whose incredible composition was 10,000 cavalry he invaded Tibet. The Raja of Kamrup gave the Muhammadan general the admirable advice at least to wait until the spring. But Ikhtiyar-ud-din refused to listen to reason. He led his troops fifteen marches into the hills and then retired, badly worsted by the inhabitants. When his forces regained the plains the Raja of Kamrup fell on them and turned an unsuccessful expedition into complete disaster. Ikhtiyar-ud-din reached Lakhnawati with a hundred survivors and was shortly afterwards murdered.

After the death of Muhammad Ghori, Aibak became independent and ruled Northern India until his death in 1210, from an accident at polo. The line he established on an uneasy throne has been given the name of the "Slave Kings" from the origin of its founder, in those days not an unusual road to supreme power, as the Turkish slaves about the court of the Caliph, the Mamelukes in Egypt, and the rise of the Ghaznavid dynasty bear witness. The Moslem rulers

found these able servants excellent advisers, gave them the highest posts, and at times rewarded them by marriage with their daughters.

Aibak's death was followed by disorder and revolt among both the Muhammadans and Hindus and, in 1211, the *Iltutmish*.

Moslem nobles offered the throne to Shams-ud-din Iltutmish, son-in-law of Aibak, the most outstanding of his slaves and a member of a leading family of the Ilbari tribe of Turkmans.

It was seventeen years before Iltutmish reduced to order a kingdom which he had found in utter confusion, with Hindustan, Multan and Sind all in open rebellion. To add to his anxieties the formidable Chingiz Khan, in the full tide of the merciless conquests which ravaged Central Asia, invaded the Western Punjab in 1221. But, luckily for the inhabitants of Northern India, the Mongolian hordes came no further into the country and retired into Afghanistan.

But while Iltutmish was establishing his rule from the Indus to the mouths of the Ganges, a power was rising in his own capital which was to master his successors. *"The Forty."*

The Turkish slaves of the court formed themselves into a conclave known as "The Forty" and, ousting the free nobility from the more important offices, gradually got the reins of government into their own hands.

Although Muhammadan rule in India had been ushered in with the widespread iconoclasm of Mahmud of Ghazni it must be remembered that this leader in war was himself a patron of the arts and that Islam has enriched the world, from Granada to Agra, with superb gems of architecture. It was not art itself which the Muhammadan conquerors hated but the Hindu religion and its expression in erotic images and carvings. *Early Moslem Architecture.*

The reigns of the earlier Slave Kings mark the beginning of Moslem architecture in India. Aibak and Iltutmish between them erected within the citadel of Delhi the magnificent buildings known as the Jami mosque and the Kutb Minar. The mosque was begun in 1191 after the occupation of the capital, and the Tower of Victory was completed in 1232. It is by his buildings at Delhi and Ajmer that Iltutmish is to be remembered.

In the building of these early mosques Hindu masons were employed and they, using the shattered remains of Jain and Hindu temples, breathed into their work the strength and grace which are the most vital characteristics of the old Indian architecture. With these were incorporated the Saracenic features of the dome, the pointed arch, the slender tower and a bold spaciousness of design, together with the detail of flat surface carving and intricate geometric ornament.

In 1236 when Iltutmish, the greatest of the Slave Kings, lay dying, he nominated his daughter Raziyya to succeed him, remarking with prophetic truth that she was a better man than any of her brothers. But the kingdom had to endure Rukn-ud-din Firuz for six months, to the accompaniment of internal rebellion and an invasion from Ghazni which penetrated to Multan, before this weak and licentious ruler was murdered and Raziyya was acclaimed Sultan in Delhi. A contemporary chronicler<sup>1</sup> has recorded of her: "She was a great sovereign and sagacious, just, beneficent and a dispenser of justice, and of warlike talent, and was endowed with all the admirable attributes and qualifications necessary for kings." But, he added, as a fatal bar she was a woman. Yet it was the century in which the slave-wife of Saladin's grand-nephew ruled in Egypt and defeated the Crusade of St. Louis of France, and a princess, the last of the house of Salghar, reigned for nearly twenty-five years in Fars.

For three years Raziyya held her own: by diplomacy as when, at the beginning of her reign, she was threatened by an overwhelming confederacy including Multan and Lahore, and in the field, where she accompanied her troops not merely unveiled, but dressed as a man and mounted on her elephant. But she made one fatal mistake, and it cost her the throne and her life. Instead of relying entirely upon "The Forty" she chose as one of her chief advisers an Abyssinian, Yaqut. The jealous and infuriated "Forty" raised a rebellion, and its leader Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altunya defeated the royal

<sup>1</sup> Minhaj-ud-din, who wrote his chronicle the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* during the reign of Nasir-ud-din (1246-1266); translated by Major H. G. Raverty, Bibliotheca Indica Series, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1880.

troops, took the queen prisoner, and made her half-brother Bahram king in 1240. But Raziyya had not reached the end of her resources. She married her captor Altunya and at the head of a large army marched on Delhi to win back the throne. But the fates were against her. Bahram routed her forces and Raziyya was killed by a rustic for the rich clothes she was wearing while she slept worn out in the forest.

Bahram, after a nominal rule of two years, quarrelled with his masters, "The Forty," and was put to death, the marked event in his reign being a Mongol raid at the end of 1241 in which Lahore was taken and sacked.

Ala-ud-din Mas'ud, the grandson of Iltutmish who came to the throne in 1242, succeeded to a kingdom which was rapidly shorn by revolt of Sind, Multan, the Upper Punjab, Bengal and Bihar. As he was indolent, a drunkard and unbalanced in his gusts of severity, "The Forty" decided in 1246 to make his uncle Nasir-ud-din Mahmud king in his place. Mas'ud was murdered and Nasir-ud-din, then a youth of seventeen, succeeded him.

The new ruler was studious, strictly temperate and deeply religious, while he had in Balban a minister of untiring energy as a military leader and of unbending determination. This member of "The Forty" came from Central Asia where his father was a ruling chief, but Balban, the slave, was to rise to far greater heights than the chieftainship of an obscure Turkman clan.

Within two years Balban reduced the unruly Hindu tribes of the Punjab to order, repelled a Mongol raid and reasserted the authority of the central government among the turbulent Hindus of the Doab. Created lieutenant of the kingdom in 1249 after the marriage of his daughter to Nasir-ud-din, Balban was now the most powerful man in Northern India, and "The Forty" began to plot his downfall. In 1253 Balban was banished to his fief of Nagaur, to be recalled eighteen months later and reinstated in his former position at Delhi. From then onwards he held the kingdom together by the energy and ruthlessness of his campaigns, and when Nasir-ud-din, the last of the male descendants of Iltutmish, died in 1266, he became king as Ghiyas-ud-din Balban. The throne to which he had succeeded was

anything but secure, for the ruler of Northern India was exposed to the danger of Mongol invasion and to the possibility of conspiracy and rebellion among the Moslem nobles and ambitious provincial governors.

*Conditions in Northern India.* The Muhammadans, who were almost immeasurably outnumbered by the far from unwarlike Hindu agricultural population, kept their hold by means of widespread garrisons, while great fiefs were scattered over the country to provide local governors or hold the Rajput and north-west marches. As regards the bulk of the people, the attitude of the Indian peasant towards the government of the country and the religion of his rulers has always been one of complete indifference, provided he is allowed to cultivate his land in peace and without oppression. The Slave Kings were, on the whole, cruel and intolerant only towards rebellion and banditry. All the minor posts dealing with such matters as land assessment and revenue were in Hindu hands, and the normal custom of the central government was to confirm the Indian rulers and landholders, as vassals, in the possession of their inheritances. These Hindus of the upper class did at times rebel, but a general rising against a foreign yoke in India, where no universal national feeling has ever crystallized into united action, was an impossibility.

*Balban.* Throughout his reign Balban had to put down incessant Hindu disaffection and the rebellion of ambitious Muhammadan nobles, and he did this by what amounted to a reign of terror. Even under the mild Mahmud he had crushed the Meo bandits, at least for a time, with horrible ferocity, massacring the more fortunate men, women and children by the thousand, and publically putting 250 of the leaders to death by being trampled by elephants, cut into pieces, or flayed alive. As king he was prepared to hang an unsuccessful general to encourage the remainder and did not hesitate to inflict the most terrible punishments as a deterrent to his enemies. It was his life or theirs, and he succeeded in holding his unruly realm until he died at the age of eighty-two. He relied

on the swiftness of his forced marches when quelling a revolt, kept order by the establishment of forts at important points and counted, in his internal administration, on that feature of Muhammadan rule in India, an army of spies who were independent of the local governors.

One of the first acts of his reign had been to draw the fangs of "The Forty." Another was to organize the defence of his frontier against the insistent danger of Mongol invasion. He gave his cousin Sher Khan the command of a well-equipped army and made forts at strategic points to bar the way to Delhi. He also cut roads through the jungle to tame the hill tribes.

In 1270 Balban re-established the provincial government of Lahore, and in 1280 he put down a formidable rebellion in Bengal. The Governor, Tughril, was killed and his family and adherents impaled on rows of stakes along the two miles of the main street of Lakhnawati. Balban made one of his sons, Bughra Khan, Governor of Bengal.

Mongol incursions during his reign met with no great success, but in 1285 Balban experienced the greatest sorrow of his life when his promising son and heir Muhammad Khan was killed in action against the Mongol invaders of Multan.

Balban died in 1287. The short unprepossessing slave who had risen from water-carrier to huntsman, from huntsman to general and statesman, and so to supreme power, had held his kingdom together and saved it from foreign invasion. Temperate in his living, for he neither drank wine nor gambled after he came to the throne, Balban was fully alive to the value of the ceremony and state which he maintained. Capable though he was of appalling cruelty to the disaffected, he was otherwise just and tolerant, and for all his severity he was undoubtedly popular with his Hindu subjects.

After his death the Moslem ministers set Kaiqubad the son of Bughra Khan upon the throne. It was an unfortunate selection. The young king, freed from the trammels of a strict upbringing, plunged into the lowest depths of debauchery, and in three years had drunk himself into a state of helpless paralysis. The sword which hung

over the head of a worthless and incompetent ruler of those days was unnecessary, and Kaiqubad's assassin despatched him with a contemptuous kick on the head.

Jalal-ud-din Firoz, whom the anti-Turkish section of the Moslem nobility now made king of Delhi at the age of seventy, *Firoz.* was not a popular choice. He was a Khalji, the tribe to which Ikhtiyar-ud-din the ambitious governor of Bengal had belonged, and he was regarded as a foreign intruder and a barbarian. The new king dared not show himself in Delhi, and built a suburban capital at Kilkhri a few miles away from the city. There he reigned for six years with a mildness and a mistaken clemency towards defeated rebels, bandits and murderers which justly exasperated the Khalji officers of the court. Balban had been guilty of inhuman ferocity when he dealt with the Meos, but to capture a thousand thugs, convey them down river in boats and then set them loose in Bengal was an act of culpable folly and injustice.

In 1292, two years after Firoz began to reign, a horde of more than a hundred thousand Mongols invaded the country. Partly as the result of a successful battle and partly by negotiation, Firoz made them withdraw, though some of their number stayed in India as converts to Islam and settled round Delhi. About five years later they rose in rebellion, and Ala-ud-din, who was then on the throne, dealt with the rising by slaughtering all the male settlers in one day, a number estimated at between 15,000 and 30,000.

The only other outstanding event of the reign was the amazing raid into the Deccan made in 1294-95 by Ala-ud-din, Governor of Kara and nephew and son-in-law of the king. Arranging with his deputy for the periodical despatch of news to Delhi which would allay all suspicion of anything unusual, Ala-ud-din with about eight thousand horsemen made a march of two months through the unknown and hostile country of Berar. He defeated the greatly superior forces got together to oppose him, forced Ramachandra, King of Deogiri and the Western Deccan to sue for peace, and returned safely to Kara with plunder and an indemnity amounting to nearly 20,000 pounds weight of gold, 200 pounds of pearls and a great quantity of silver.



Firoz, hearing that his favourite relative was returning with immense spoils from the south, hurried to Kara to meet Ala-ud-din against the advice and warnings of his councillors, and was murdered while welcoming his treacherous nephew.

Ala-ud-din at once marched upon Delhi with his uncle's head on a pike, scattering largesse as he went and buying over the army of 120,000 men sent to oppose him, and at the beginning of October 1296 he was enthroned as king. He had gained the kingdom by an act of the vilest treachery and ingratitude, and he at once strengthened his position by putting out the eyes of the murdered king's two sons. A few months later his general, Zafar Khan, completely defeated a large horde of invading Mongols near Jullundur, and his throne was secure.

Ala-ud-din now began the series of repressive measures which were one of the features of his reign, and his first objective was the Moslem nobility whom he had bribed to win over to his side. He argued that he had reached supreme power by the use of money, and consequently great riches in the hands of his subjects might easily become a danger to himself. He removed that danger by despoiling the nobles, and some were blinded or imprisoned and others killed, while their families were reduced to beggary.

In putting down a revolt due to the discontent aroused by the division of the plunder taken when Gujerat was annexed in 1297, the king established the barbarous principle of making the innocent wives and families suffer for the sins of rebels against the government.

The ease with which success had come to Ala-ud-din unbalanced his judgement. He dreamed over the wine-cup of founding a new universal religion to overshadow Islam and of establishing a world empire greater than the conquests of Alexander. But Ala-ul-Mulk the friend of his youth, and now the fat and level-headed chief magistrate of Delhi, succeeded in bringing him to reason, tactfully pointing out that preaching was for prophets; and as for finding new worlds to conquer, the whole of Southern India was still unsubdued, and marauding hordes of Mongols were an ever-present

danger on his frontier. The magistrate had the courage to add that less wine and a closer attention to business would be an advantage to the king and to his subjects. Ala-ud-din instead of resenting this candid advice promised to adopt it and handsomely rewarded his counsellor.

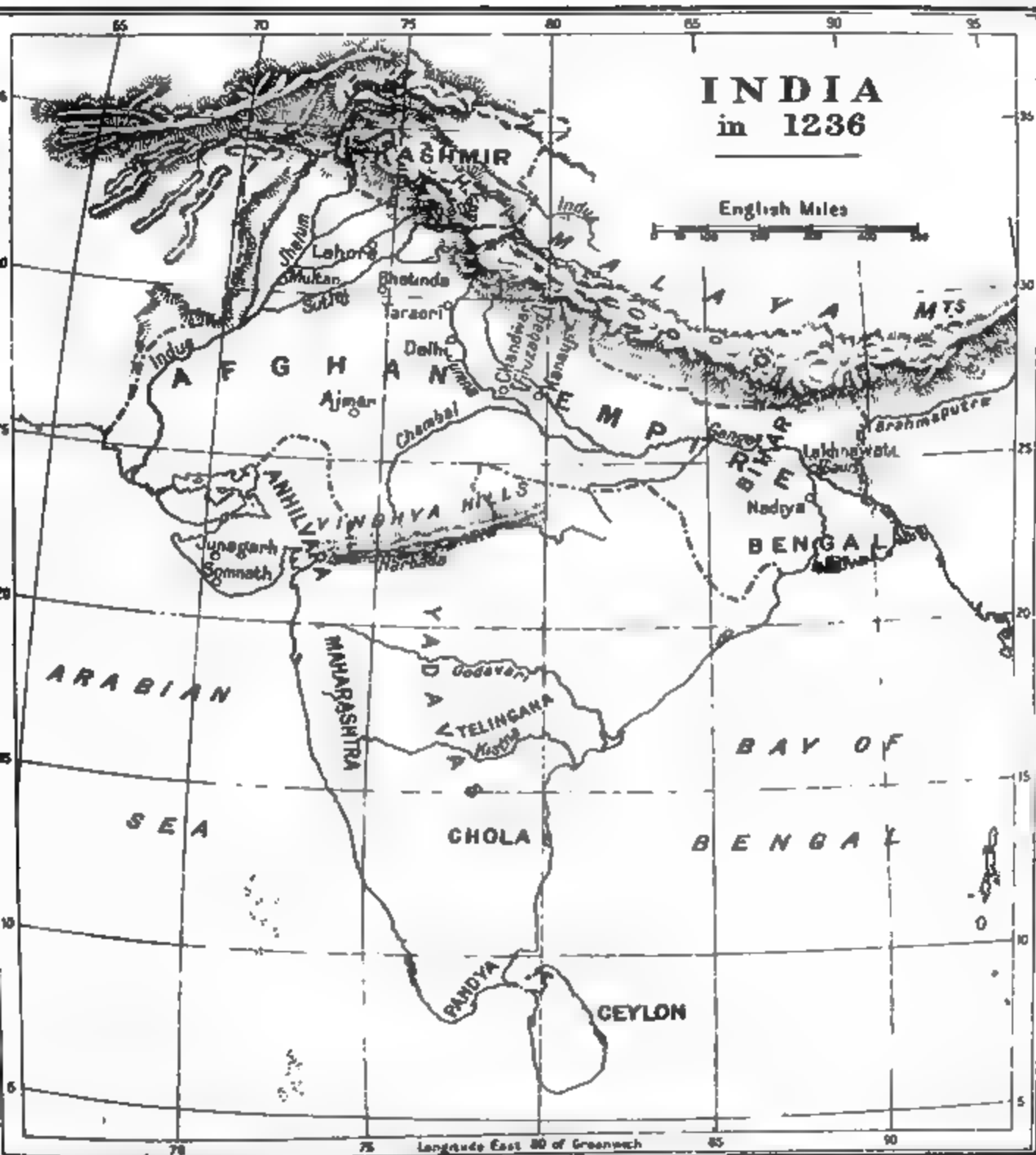
It was not long before the threat of Mongol invasion again came to a head. An incursion made in 1297 was easily dealt with by Zafar Khan, but two years later a horde of about 200,000 Mongols entered India bent not upon plunder but conquest, and appeared before the walls of Delhi. In the battle which ensued Zafar Khan charged the Mongol line with impetuous fury, routed the left flank and hotly pursued the flying enemy. But the general by his constant successes in the field had aroused the jealousy of his master, and Ala-ud-din, although his kingdom was at stake, saw his faithful servant go to certain death without attempting to support him by an advance upon the weakened Mongol forces. Night fell upon what seemed to be a drawn battle, but in the morning the invaders had disappeared, shaken by the desperate valour of Zafar Khan, and the danger was over.

Ala-ud-din's home and foreign policy can be described in the two words repression and annexation. He was convinced that the succession of revolts against his authority were due to the general prosperity in which too many people were rich and idle, and he took steps to remedy this.

The Moslem nobles were watched by informers, and kept in hand by restrictions on social gatherings and a law forbidding marriage without the royal consent, while he attacked private property by confiscating all religious endowments and grants of rent-free land, and by making a general seizure of gold. By another ordinance he forbade the use of intoxicating liquors and drugs, a law which, it must be said, he obeyed himself, only to find that private stills and smuggling became general. The drinking habit was too strong for legislation and this enactment had to be relaxed.

These ordinances pressed heavily upon his Muhammadan subjects, but they were light in comparison with the repressive measures

English Miles





directed against the Hindus, many of whom were rich and discontented and whose religion he hated. No Hindu was allowed to ride a horse, or carry arms, and the sumptuary laws were very severe. Hindu taxation was now raised from the customary one-sixth of all land produce to a half, and duties were levied upon all cattle, goats and sheep. The Moslem revenue officials were universally loathed, and the wretched Hindu hereditary assessors and collectors were reduced to the level of unwilling slaves. It should, however, be remembered that, with the exception of the *jizya* (poll tax), these are the only instances of special laws against the Hindus in Muhammadan legislation.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from his anxiety to curb the spirit of his subjects, Ala-ud-din unquestionably required money to keep up an efficient and contented standing army and maintain the forts in a state of repair, as a protection against Mongol invasion. His own defence of his administration is recorded: "Whatever I think to be for the good of the State, or opportune for the emergency, that I decree."

Ala-ud-din's policy, when not interrupted by Mongol invasion, was to annex as much of India as he could administer from Delhi. The more distant States which he was able to subdue were put under tribute; and at the same time he made his authority absolute over the confederacy of fiefs which owed allegiance to Delhi.

Mongol invasion was an ever-present danger, and between 1297-1308<sup>2</sup> six of these incursions succeeded in swamping the frontier garrisons and penetrated some distance into India. The most formidable of all was made in 1303, when the Mongols took advantage of the opportunity given by Ala-ud-din's siege of Chitor. The invading host of 120,000 men laid siege to Delhi, and only the difficulty of supporting so large an army in devastated country, with the added pressure of Ala-ud-din's forces as the great fief-holders began to concentrate, forced them to retire without taking the capital.

*Mongol  
Invasions.*

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 111, 112 cites an invasion in 1306 and another in 1307-8 (both across the Indus), when the prisoners were in the customary manner crushed to death by elephants. But see *Oxford History of India*, p. 232, where 1305 is given as the certain date of the final attack.

*Indian Campaigns.* Ala-ud-din's Indian campaigns of conquest began in 1297, when he overthrew the Rajput State of Gujarat, the richest kingdom in India, and appointed a Moslem governor in place of the last ruler of the Vaghala dynasty. It was then that the Hindu eunuch, the slave Kafur, came into the king's service to be at first his vicious favourite, then as Malik Naib lieutenant of the kingdom, and finally for five weeks to be regent of India. In 1301 Ranthambhor was taken, after an obstinate resistance ending with the rite of *jauhar*, and Chauhan rule in Hindustan was at an end. Ala-ud-din's next campaign was against Chitor, which was taken and sacked in 1303; but before it fell its Rajput defenders took so heavy a toll of the Moslem army that Ala-ud-din nearly lost Delhi to the Mongols, who were then invading India. Malwa was conquered in 1305, Marwar in 1307, and Ala-ud-din's armies then went farther afield.

The Telingana country was reduced in 1308, and in 1310 Kafur Hasardinari,<sup>1</sup> now Malik Naib, having established Moslem supremacy in the Deccan, was sent with Khvaja Haji on a great expedition to the south, with orders to plunder the Hoysala kingdom and make their way to the southernmost point of India. The enterprise met with complete success. The capital Dvaravatipura was taken and sacked, and Vira Ballala III was captured. The victorious Muhammadan army went on into the Pandya kingdom, took Madura its capital, destroyed the great temple there and, moving eastward to the coast, founded on what are now the Palk Straits a mosque which Malik Naib named after his master. The victors left Madura on the return march on April 24, 1311, and reached Delhi on October 18, with the huge spoils which included 312 elephants, 20,000 horses and 2750 pounds of gold.

*Death of Ala-ud-din.* Ala-ud-din was now at the height of his power. The fear of Mongol invasion had gone, rebellion had been crushed, money was cheap on account of the immense plunder that had poured in from the south, and his armies could be easily maintained. The control of the markets kept down the cost of living, no robbers dared to infest the high roads, and the land could be tilled in peace.

<sup>1</sup> "The thousand dinar slave," the nickname coming from his purchase price.

But from 1311 Ala-ud-din's powers declined rapidly. Excesses had undermined his health, his violent temper became quite uncontrolled, and the tyrannical acts to which he was instigated by Malik Naib caused widespread discontent and open rebellion. Finally he developed dropsy and died at the beginning of January 1316, his end hastened, it was generally supposed, by Malik Naib.

Ala-ud-din has left, in the Alai Darwaza, a monument to his reign which, as Sir John Marshall has observed,<sup>1</sup> is one of the most treasured gems of Islamic architecture; and he built the second of the seven cities of Delhi at Siri as a fortified capital about the year 1303. Indifferent to learning though he was, men of letters were to be found at his court. In Amir Khusru, Ala-ud-din had as his poet laureate the most celebrated of all the Indian poets who ever wrote in Persian. He had started his literary career at the court of Balban, remained at Delhi during the reign of Ala-ud-din, and died in religious retirement at the age of seventy-two in 1325, after writing more than 400,000 couplets. But no poet laureate, however gifted, could wash the blood from the hands of the king who described himself upon his coinage as "The Second Alexander" and dreamt of founding a world-wide religion.

Malik Naib, on the death of Ala-ud-din, presented himself to the Moslem nobles of Delhi as regent of the kingdom for an infant son of the late king, and with the object of usurping the throne he used his brief authority to imprison, blind or murder every other member of the royal family whom he could get within his power. After a regency lasting thirty-five days he was killed by the palace guard, and Mubarak, Ala-ud-din's third son, a youth of about eighteen, was recognized as regent for his little brother.

Two months later Mubarak blinded the six-year-old king and ascended the throne as Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah. He began his reign by releasing seventeen thousand prisoners and abolishing all the taxes and penalties which his father had imposed.

*Qutb-ud-din  
Mubarak.*

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 583.

The new king then proceeded to flout his own religion, and plunged for the four years of his reign into the foulest depths of debauchery with an outcast from Gujarat, known as Khusru Khan, as the royal favourite. With profligacy he combined the violent temper and inhuman cruelty of his father. Conspiracies were put down to the accompaniment of wholesale slaughter of innocent children, and when Harpal Deo, raja of Deogarh, raised a feeble rebellion in the Deccan in 1317, Mubarak had him flayed alive. In 1320 Khusru Khan murdered his master and proclaimed himself king as Nasir-ud-din Khusru Shah, "The Helper of the Faith."

For a reign of less than five months the usurper and his fellow-ruffians, who had celebrated Mubarak's murder by breaking into the harem, butchering the children of the royal family and outraging the women, defiled the mosques and openly insulted the faith of the dominant power in India. Then the end came. Ghazi Malik, warden of the north-western marches, a loyal supporter of the late dynasty and a strict Muhammadan, came down from the Punjab and marched on Delhi. He defeated Khusru, executed him after the battle, and, finding that the Khalji house had ceased to exist, was proclaimed king under the title of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlak Shah.

The founder of the new dynasty, the son of a Turkish slave in Balban's household who had married a Jat woman, though old in years was both energetic and resolute. He at once began to remedy as far as possible the injustice and follies of the previous months. In spite of the unpopularity it aroused, Tughlak recovered the royal treasure which had been plundered or squandered by Khusru, and allayed discontent by his measures for the welfare of his subjects. He encouraged agriculture by limiting the taxation of the gross produce to a tenth, and he made irrigation one of the public works. Tughlak also instituted a postal service far more efficient than any previously known in India. The news of the arrival, at the mouth of the Indus in 1333, of the Moorish traveller, Ibn Batutah,<sup>1</sup> author of the celebrated

<sup>1</sup> See bibliographical note at end of chapter.



account of the first Tughlak kings, reached Delhi by post in five days, a distance between eight and nine hundred miles. This postal service speaks volumes for the security of the country at the time.

In 1321 a rebellion broke out in Telingana, where the Hindu raja of Warangal disavowed allegiance to the new dynasty. This was not put down by Ulugh Khan, the king's eldest son, until 1323, when the Telingana country was annexed as a province of the empire and divided into fiefs and districts under Moslem nobles and officials.

While this campaign was in progress Tughlak beat off a Mongol invasion and then made an expedition to Bengal. Taking advantage of the civil war which was raging in that country Tughlak converted Eastern Bengal, which had been independent for thirteen years, into a province of Delhi. At the same time he reasserted his suzerainty over the kingdom of Western Bengal, where he left Nasir-ud-din, the descendant of Bughra Khan of the house of Balban, as his vassal. On this expedition Tirhut was annexed.

On his return to Tughlakabad, the capital which he had built for himself and his great treasure-house south of Delhi, Tughlak was killed by the fall of a roof treacherously planned by Ulugh Khan,<sup>1</sup> who had already (during the Warangal expedition) shown flagrant disloyalty to his father. Tughlak had been greatly disquieted by his eldest son's undesirable friendship with Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, whom the king had warned that Delhi would be too small for them both. The Shaikh is recorded to have returned the reply, "*Hanuz Dilhi dur ast*," which afterwards became famous as the Oriental equivalent to the Highland saying, "It is a far cry to Loch Awe."

Ulugh Khan ascended the throne of Delhi in 1325 with the title of Muhammad Shah over the body of his murdered father, the ominous beginning of a reign of rebellion and bloodshed.

*Muhammad  
Shah's Character.*

There are kings in history who have been overwhelmed by undeserved ill-fortune, but Muhammad Shah Tughlak was not one

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of this chapter.

of them. His fault was not in his star but in the incredible and contradictory character of the man himself, which brought catastrophe after catastrophe upon a peaceful empire extending from the Khyber to the Sunderbunds and from the Himalaya to what is now Mysore. The highly cultured scholar and man of letters, who established hospitals and alms-houses and was capable of boundless generosity to foreigners, was equally capable of the most revolting cruelty to his own flesh and blood and to thousands of his unfortunate people, innocent and guilty alike. The king whose pride, in the words of Barani his chronicler and friend, "was so overweening that he could not endure to hear of a corner of the earth not subject to his sway and whose ambition it was to make all the kings of the earth his slaves," would grovel publicly in embarrassing submission before foreign visitors of distinction. Regular in his devotions, a rigid abstainer from wine, and conforming in his private life to the ritual and moral precepts of Islam, he habitually flung the laws of God and man to the winds when dealing with his subjects, while the smallest infraction of an impracticable regulation of his own and the most flagrant act of rebellion were equally punished, in his unbalanced judgement, by a cruel death. He was a brave and energetic soldier, and his military operations in common with his administrative measures exhibited at times abilities of the highest order and at others were the acts of a madman.<sup>1</sup> "*Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*"

In 1327, the second year of Muhammad's reign, the king's cousin Baha-ud-din Gurshap rose in revolt and the rebellion spread throughout the Deccan before it was crushed. Gurshap then took refuge with the Raja of Kampli, who beat off the first attack made by Muhammad's troops, but on the arrival of reinforcements the fall of the place became certain. The raja, no longer able to protect his guest, sent him to Vira Ballala III Hoysala for sanctuary, and then, after the women had all perished in the rite of *jauhar*, led out his fighting men to meet a Rajput death. Vira Ballala weakly surrendered

<sup>1</sup> See Firishta's *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power*, Vol. I. pp. 409-443, and *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. Ch. VI.

Gurshap, who was taken to Deogir, where Muhammad flayed and roasted him alive, sent his cooked flesh to his family and, after stuffing his skin with straw, exhibited the loathsome trophy in the chief cities of the kingdom.

During his stay in Deogir, Muhammad decided to establish a more central seat of government and decreed that the place, which he renamed Daulatabad,<sup>1</sup> should be the new capital; and a great and spacious city with magnificent buildings was admirably planned and built for the official and trading community. With Daulatabad as his base Muhammad soon restored order in the Deccan, only to learn that Multan and Sind were in revolt, a rising which was crushed with equal success. Later in the year 1328 the Mongols made an incursion which penetrated as far as the Ganges before it was repulsed.

During the first four years of his reign Muhammad's ruthless cruelty had been generally aimed at individuals, not all of whom were guilty, although at the taking of Multan only the prayers of Shaikh Rukn-ud-din had prevented a general massacre of the inhabitants. But in 1329 Muhammad inflicted upon his people the first of the wholesale vindictive punishments which eventually led to the dismemberment of the empire.

Muhammad came back to stay in Delhi, after the retirement of the Mongols, to find himself highly unpopular with its inhabitants, who had been almost ruined by the removal of the court to Daulatabad. The citizens showed their discontent by throwing anonymous letters of abuse into the hall-audience at night. The king replied by issuing a decree that every soul was to leave Delhi, a city ten miles across including its suburbs, and go to Daulatabad, more than six hundred miles away, and the miserably inadequate arrangements forbade the transport of their possessions. When the inhabitants hesitate to obey, a second proclamation gave them three days to quit. The Muhammad went through the deserted streets and finding a cripple and a blind man still within the walls had them tortured to death.

<sup>1</sup> "The abode of riches" For the marvellous feat of engineering in the fortification of the citadel of Deogir see *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 141.

*Devastation of the Doab.* In the first year of his reign Muhammad had caused a register of revenue and expenditure to be made by all the provincial governments, apparently to establish a uniform assessment, but in 1330 he introduced into the Doab new and heavy taxation, partly to fill a depleted treasury but chiefly to punish the turbulent and disaffected Hindus living in one of his richest and most fertile provinces. The taxation was at least doubled and the peasants, being quite unable to meet the demand, fled to the jungle and took to brigandage. The whole countryside went to wrack and ruin, its inhabitants became the king's open enemies, and by 1333 a state of war existed in the Doab and Kanauj.

*Token Currency.* About the year 1329, in order to raise money, Muhammad tried the expedient of a token currency. The idea of substituting paper for metal was not a new one; it had been used in China with suitable precautions, and also in Persia. But Muhammad believed that, by a decree, he could make copper tokens pass current as gold and silver coins. The king failed to realize the ease with which counterfeit tokens could be made. In four years the scheme collapsed under "mountains" of false tokens, and Muhammad, to his credit be it said, recalled the expensive issue, and although it was impossible to distinguish the counterfeit from the genuine, paid for the tokens presented at the treasury in good money. The gold tanga had risen to the value of a hundred copper tokens, and the king's subjects for once made a good thing out of a government whose farming of the provincial and district taxes was already a scandal which was growing into a source of frequent rebellion.

*Famine Relief* Muhammad had by this time revoked his decree against the citizens of Delhi, and a number of them had returned to their homes and a famine-stricken district. The king took prompt measures for their relief, giving a daily issue of grain and cooked food and advancing large sums to the peasants for seed corn, stock and necessary improvements. Partly on account of official dishonesty the loans were not a success, and Muhammad visited the failure upon his starving subjects with an orgy of barbarous

executions. Something had, however, to be done for the people of Delhi, and Muhammad once more ordered the evacuation of the city, this time, however, for the welfare of his subjects. In 1336 he built a town of booths a hundred and sixty-five miles away at Sargadwari, and these huts were replaced in the following year by more permanent buildings. Here, supplied from the fertile province of Oudh, which had remained prosperous under the wise and kindly rule of its governor 'Ain-ul-Mulk, the Delhi colony remained for six years.

The rest of Muhammad's reign is a tale of unbroken and irreparable disaster. In the madness of his dreams of world conquest Muhammad resolved to conquer China through Tibet, and in the year 1337 he sent an army of 100,000 cavalry and a strong force of infantry, under Malik Nikpai (who held the honorary post of Chief of the Inkstand-bearers), to destruction amidst the forests and passes of the Himalaya. A year later the general himself, two other officers and about ten men returned to India, the sole survivors of the expedition. This catastrophe, in which a large army and a huge amount of treasure were lost, shook the empire to its foundations, and rebellion broke out against Muhammad's tyranny throughout the twenty-three provinces.

Whenever Muhammad marched to subdue his subjects in one part of his empire, rebellion flamed up elsewhere, and by 1339 Eastern and Western Bengal had both successfully asserted their independence, to be finally united in one kingdom by Malik Iliyas in 1352.

To the evils of war, which Muhammad tried in vain to end by frightfulness, were added the horrors of a famine in which the people of Northern India were reduced to eating human flesh. Muhammad's measures, had they been practical, would, in the words of his chronicler, Barani, have so improved agriculture that "plenty would have reigned throughout the earth and so much money would have poured into the treasury that the king would have been able to conquer the world." As it was, the Ministry of Agriculture and the district undertakers who were

given more than seventy million tankas as an inducement to establish the theoretical rotation of crops, proved a complete failure.

Southern India in the meanwhile was not only throwing off the suzerainty of its Tughlak overlord, but returning to Hindu kings. *Dismemberment of the Empire.* Vira Ballala III established his independence at Dvaravatipura, and a son of the heroic raja who had protected Gurshap with his life ruled over Kampli, while Krishna Naik, who had expelled the Moslem officers from Telingana, had made himself king at Warangal.

But the most crushing blow fell in 1347, when a revenue collector, Hasan Zafar Khan, got together a large body of insurgents and inflicted so decisive a defeat upon the royal forces that the Deccan was lost to the kingdom of Delhi. The victorious leader ascended the throne he had won for himself as Abu'l-Muzaffar Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, founder of the Bahmani dynasty.

The news of this disaster reached Muhammad when he was putting down a rebellion in Gujarat and Kathiawar, and, giving up all hope of recovering the Deccan, he proceeded to restore order in his western provinces. *Death of Muhammad Tughluq.* But in March 1351 he died of fever in Sind and "the king was freed from his people and they from their king"<sup>1</sup>; a king who had lavished almost untold wealth upon foreigners who visited his country but who had, in his own words to Barani, "looked upon his subjects as his natural enemies, and the penal laws as a means of visiting his personal displeasure on them."

Muhammad Tughlak was succeeded, at the end of August 1351, by his cousin Firoz, the elderly son of Siparsalar *Firoz Shah Tughlak.* Rajab and a Rajput princess. The new king, indolent, easy-going and kindly except in matters of religion, had one invaluable asset, an unerring judgement of character. Had he not been so faithfully served by the ministers

<sup>1</sup> *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, Vol. I. p. 317, by Ibn-i-Mulk Shah, known as Abdu'l Qadir al Badaoni (Budauni), who wrote his history in the reign of Akbar. For the tremendous indictment upon which the estimate of Muhammad Tughluq's character given in this chapter is based, see pp. 315-317 of *Al-Badaoni's History*, Vol. I.

**INDIA**  
in 1312.

## English Miles



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and the viceroys to whom he freely delegated his authority, the kingdom of Delhi would have broken into pieces during his reign. From the day of his accession Firoz had as his chief adviser the able Malik Maqbul, a Brahman of Telingana who had been converted to Islam, and the administration was supported by a large body of loyal officers. But the wholesale decentralization of authority, coupled with a return to the system of paying government officials by assignments of grants of land and their revenue instead of in cash, undoubtedly led to the subsequent collapse of the dynasty. These grants are known as *jagirs*, and Ala-ud-din had abolished the system as liable to cause insubordination and rebellion.

The king's first object was to relieve agriculture from the heavy burdens imposed by Muhammad. He reduced  
*Agricultural* taxation to a level which left an encouraging margin  
*Reform.* for the cultivator, and he abolished the annual benevolences levied by the provincial governors. On the advice of Malik Maqbul he cancelled the bonds of the agricultural loans advanced by Muhammad and which the peasants had been quite unable to repay.

Firoz gave a further impetus to the great industry of the country by extensive irrigation works and the sinking of wells, for which a ten per cent. water-rate was imposed. A number of dams and reservoirs were constructed, and five great canals were dug to distribute the waters of the Jhelum and the Sutlej, while engineers were appointed to look after the banks in flood-time. One of these canals, which still exists as the "Old Jhelum Canal," ran for more than 150 miles to irrigate the desert country up to the city which Firoz founded under the name of Hisar-i-Firoza.

The cultivated area of the kingdom increased enormously. Around Delhi alone there grew up 1200 fruit gardens and vineyards, while the revenue from the Doab, which Muhammad had laid waste and almost depopulated, rose to eight million tangas, approximately £670,000. According to Shams-i-Siraj Afif, whose *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* gives a most laudatory account of the reign, the revenue of the kingdom was equivalent to about £6,850,000. About the year 1375, four years after the death of Malik Maqbul, Firoz abolished

the heavy octroi duties which seriously hampered trade, although this involved a loss of about £250,000 to the revenue.

Where the religion of the great majority of his subjects, the Hindus, was not concerned, Firoz was a benevolent ruler. He abolished torture and mutilation throughout the kingdom, founded a hospital and introduced such measures as an employment bureau for clerical workers and an efficient marriage agency for Muhammadans of the middle class and the families of government servants. But while his kindness amounted to culpable leniency when extended towards corrupt practices in his thirty-six Departments of State, his attitude in regard to Moslem heretics and Hindus was relentless, and Firoz repressed the Shia sect as sternly as he dealt with the licentious Hindu Saktas. He did not destroy existing Hindu temples but he forbade the erection of new ones, an offence punishable with death. Firoz raised a storm of unavailing protest by the Brahmans which went so far as the threat to commit *dharna* by burning themselves alive when he extended the *jizya* (poll tax on Hindus) to include them. Brahmans had previously been exempt, and they now became assessed at the lowest scale of 10 tangas (approximately 10 rupees) a year, the other grades being 20 and 40 tangas respectively.

Only once in his reign of thirty-seven years did Firoz descend to the level of his predecessor in an act of vengeance. In 1379 Sayyid Muhammad, Governor of Budaun, and his two brothers, when visiting the Raja of Katehr, were murdered by their host. A year later Firoz marched into the country, massacred many thousands of its Hindu inhabitants, captured 23,000 as slaves, and instituted, for the following five years, an annual slaughter and devastation throughout Katehr.

Firoz devoutly believed that he was serving God by looking upon the public practice of the Hindu religion held by the vast majority of his subjects as a capital crime, and it is recorded that he burnt a Brahman alive for this act. He accordingly made efforts to convert the people from Hinduism to Islam. To quote his own words: "I proclaimed that everyone who repeated the creed and became a Musalman should be exempt from the *jizya* . . . and a

great number of Hindus were admitted to . . . Islam . . . and were favoured with presents and honours." In this way a part of the existing Muhammadan population of India originated.

A feature of the reign was the slave-raiding which the king systematically encouraged through his fief-holders  
*Slave-Raiding.* on their campaigns. Siya-ud-din Barani records that there were about 180,000 slaves in the kingdom. These all became Muhammadans and appear to have been well treated during the lifetime of Firoz, although most of his personal attendants were murdered by his grandson Abu Bakr.

Firoz made no effort to reconquer the Deccan, an enterprise which the incomparably more able and energetic  
*Campaigns.* soldier Muhammad had not attempted. Firoz had no military ambition and was in fact an irresolute and incapable commander. But in November 1353 he was stirred into taking the field with a force of 70,000 cavalry when Shams-ud-din Ilyas Shah, the independent ruler of Bengal, made an incursion into Tirhut. Ilyas was driven back, but Firoz failed in his attempt to conquer Bengal. It was on his return from this campaign that he founded a new capital, Firozbad, and connected it with Delhi, ten miles distant, by means of a regular transport service with fixed rates for the hire of vehicles. After a second and equally abortive invasion of Bengal in 1359 Firoz, who was the most indefatigable builder in Indian history and an enthusiastic restorer of ancient monuments, founded the palace city of Jaunpur.

In the cold weather of 1360 Orissa was successfully invaded. But the army lost its way on the return march and strayed through the jungles and hill country of Chota Nagpur for about six months while Maqbul the acting regent had considerable difficulty in dealing with the unrest which broke out in Delhi.

A similar incident occurred during the retreat of Firoz after the disastrous campaign of 1362 in Sind, when no news reached Delhi for months and Maqbul was obliged in the interests of good order to publish a fictitious despatch from the field army. In the following year the Jam Mali of Sind was forced to sue for peace, which was granted on the easy condition of an annual tribute. The repression

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of a rising in Etawah in 1377 was another military operation in which Firoz was successful, and then in 1380 he began his terrible vengeance on Katehr.

The king was now seventy-five and his intellect began to weaken. Khanjahan, the son of Maqbul Khan, took up the reins of government, but the regent abused his position and soon fell, to be followed first by a son and then by a grandson of the failing king. Firoz died in September 1388. He had held the kingdom together by the popularity of his measures to improve the lot of his subjects and he had irreparably weakened the power of the crown by his systematic decentralization of authority. After Firoz came the deluge.

NOTE.—The account in this chapter of the death of Sultan Tughlak is the one given by Ibn Batutah. The story, however, is not supported by Ziya-ud-din Barani, the Indian historian of the reigns of Balban and the Khalji and Tughlak dynasties, who wrote the *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (Trans. Asiatic Society of Bengal, Biblio. Ind. Series, Calcutta, 1862). But Barani cannot be considered, either from the character of his work or from the fact that Muhammad Shah was his royal patron and intimate, to be as good evidence as Ibn Batutah. Firishta (*History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India*, Vol. I. pp. 407-408) gives all the conflicting accounts, from elephants pushing the building over to "the most entertaining surmise" of magical art, but his own view is patricide.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 711. Arab invasion of Sind by Muhammad Qasim.
- c. 750. Ghopala founded Pala dynasty in Bengal.
- c. 750. Rashtrakuta dynasty in the Deccan.
- c. 840-890. Reign of Mihira Parihar (Bhoja) of Kanauj; Rajput ascendancy in Western India.
- 973. Tailapa II Chalukya in power in the Deccan as ruler of Kalyani.
- 977. Sabuktigin ascended throne of Ghazni.
- 985. Accession of Rajaraja-deva the Great.
- 998-1030. Mahmud of Ghazni.
- 1001. Invasion of India and defeat of Jaipal I at Peshawar.
- 1018-1019. Capture of Kanauj.
- 1021. Mahmud conquered the Punjab.
- 1024. Sack of Somnath.
- 1030-1040. Mas'ud Ghaznavid.

## PRE-MOGUL MUHAMMADAN RULE

- 1042-1049. Maudud Ghaznavid; followed by Ma'sud II and Ab-dur-Raschid (1052); Tughril (1053); Farrukhzad (1053-1059).
- 1059-1099. Ibrahim Ghaznavid.
- 1076-1126. Vikramaditya King of Kalyana; regained Chalukya suzerainty over Mysore.
1079. Ibrahim captured Gujerat.
1099. Mas'ud III Ghaznavid; 1115 Shirzad; 1116 Arsalan Shah; 1118 Bahram Shah; 1152 Khusru Shah.
1160. Accession of Khusru Malik, last of the Ghaznavids.
- 1170-1192. Prithiviraja Chauhan of Rajputana; united Ajmer and Delhi kingdoms; took Chandela 1182.
1173. Ghiyas-ud-din Ghorî took Ghazni.
- Rise of Hoysala power.
1175. Muhammad Ghorî began conquest of Northern India.
1192. Second Battle of Taraori.
- 1193-1206. Qutb-ud-din Aibak Viceroy of Northern India.
- c. 1202. Conquest of Bengal by Ikhtiyar-ud-din.
1206. Death of Muhammad Ghuri. Aibak became King of Delhi.
1210. Death of Aibak.
- 1211-1236. Reign of Iltutmish (Slave Dynasty of Delhi).
- 1221-1222. Invasion of Chingiz Khan.
- 1236-1240. Raziyya Queen of Delhi.
- 1240-1246. Rule of "The Forty" with nominal kings of Delhi.
- 1246-1266. Nasir-ud-din King of Delhi with Balban chief minister.
- 1266-1287. Balban King of Delhi.
- 1290-1296. Firuz Shah III founder of Khalji dynasty of Delhi.
- 1296-1316. Ala-ud-din Khalji.
- 1297-1308. Mongol invasions.
- 1297-1311. Ala-ud-din's conquests in Central and Southern India.
- 1316-1320. Khalji dynasty ends in anarchy.
- 1320-1325. Tughlak Khan founder of Tughlak dynasty.
- 1325-1351. Muhammad Shah Tughlak.
- 1327-1347. Disintegration of Delhi Empire.
- 1351-1388. Firoz Shah Tughlak.

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- Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III.
- Firishta's *History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India*, tr. Colonel J. Briggs (London), 1829.
- (Firishta states that he consulted thirty-five original MSS., and twenty additional authorities are quoted in the body of his *History*.)

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Al-Badaoni's *History of India*, tr. Rankin and Lowe (Calcutta), 1898.

A reliable and vivid account of Muhammad Tughluq based on personal knowledge is given by Ibn Batutah in his *Tuhfat-un-Nazzar fi Ghara'ib-i-il Amsar*. Incomplete English translations are to be found in *Cathay and the Way Thither* (Hakluyt Society, 1916) and in the comprehensive *History of India as told by its own Historians* (Elliot and Dowson, 1867-77). Ibn Batutah was an African traveller who was in India as an official at the court of Muhammad Tughlak between 1333 and 1342. He then left on an embassy to China, was again in India after shipwreck off Calicut in 1347 and did not return to his native Fez until 1349.

## CHAPTER V

### Pre-Mogul India

ALA-UD-DIN KHALJI had given the throne of Delhi a brief supremacy over almost the whole of India. After the death of Firoz, Delhi practically ceased to exist as a sovereign State, and the story of Indian history is taken up for a time by the kingdoms, once provinces of that empire, which rebelled against the tyranny of Muhammad Tughlak and by the great Hindu kingdom which arose in the south. None of these States was affected by the terrible invasion of Timur Lane at the end of the fourteenth century, and their fortunes up to the momentous events of the early part of the sixteenth century are described in this chapter.

The fitful and uncertain suzerainty which Delhi, even at the height of its imperial power, had been able to exercise over the two eastern provinces virtually ended in 1339 when Muhammad Tughlak was staggering under the disaster of his Tibetan campaign and the terrible famine then ravaging Northern India. But it was not until 1356 that his cousin Firoz formally recognized Shams-ud-din Ilyas Shah as the independent sovereign of the united kingdom of Eastern and Western Bengal.

Ilyas died in 1357 and his line continued to rule for about fifty years, although towards the end of this period the country was actually being governed by Raja Ganesh of Dinajpur, who had defeated Hamza the ruling king in 1404. If the most detailed account is reliable Ganesh was a religious bigot who took advantage of an opportunity unusual in Indian history and persecuted the Muhammadans of Bengal until his death in 1414. His actual reign only lasted a year and he was succeeded by his son Jatmal, or Jadu, a convert to Islam, who took the title of Jalal-ud-din Muhammad.

Generally speaking, the Muhammadan rulers of Bengal were tolerant towards the religion of their Hindu subjects, but Jalal-ud-din was an exception. He had been made a convert, as a matter of policy, when his father's kingdom was invaded by the Moslem ruler of Jaunpur, and when he refused to revert to Hinduism he was imprisoned for his obstinacy. His zeal for his new religion and the strong resentment engendered by his treatment led him to persecute the members of his former faith with considerable energy during the seventeen years of his reign, and the existing numerical superiority of the Muhammadans in Bengal<sup>1</sup> may be attributed to his proselytizing efforts.

The Dinajpur line came to an end with the murder of Shams-ud-din Ahmad in 1442, when one of the chief ministers, Nasir Khan, a descendant of Ilyas, ascended the throne. His son Rukn-ud-din Barbak paved the way for the orgy of regicide which followed his death in 1474 by raising African slaves, of whom he had about eight thousand, to high positions in the government. Three African slave rulers and one youthful member of the house of Ilyas sat on the throne between 1486 and 1493, when Sayyid Ala-ud-din Hussein, whose family had come from Tirmiz on the Oxus and who had shown great ability as a minister, was elected king by the nobles.

Hussein proved an admirable choice. His first acts were to destroy the dangerous power of the Hindu household troops, whom he replaced by Muhammadans, and to expel all Africans from the kingdom. This measure put an end to all chance of a negro ruling caste arising in Bengal, a state of affairs which had been threatened by the accession of three African kings in seventeen years.

After re-establishing his government in those provinces which had fallen away from their allegiance during the six preceding reigns, Hussein turned to foreign conquest and invaded Assam in 1498. The Ahom capital was taken, but the bad climate and the im-

<sup>1</sup> About 55 per cent. of the population. Moslems predominate in two other existing provinces; in the Punjab roughly in the proportion of 12 to 7 Hindus and 3 Sikhs; overwhelmingly in the N.W.F. Province. The new province of Sind will be 75 per cent. Muhammadan (of Arab extraction).



possibility of sending up reinforcements in the rainy season brought about the failure of the expedition. Hussein made no other attempt at invasion, devoting himself instead to holding his frontiers and to building mosques and endowing alms-houses until his death in 1518. He was succeeded by his eldest son Nasir-ud-din Nusrat Shah, who lived to see the Mogul conquest of North-Western India and the appearance of the Portuguese in his own kingdom of Bengal. A strong ruler at the beginning of his reign, he sank into debauchery and was assassinated in a palace conspiracy in 1533.

Ala-ud-din Hasan had freed the Deccan from the appalling tyranny of Muhammad Tughluq in 1347 and was elected king of the country under the title of Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah. He claimed descent from the half-mythical hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyar,<sup>1</sup> from whom the dynasty which he founded is named. His reign of eleven years falls into three periods. Bahman had first of all to consolidate his kingdom by compelling the petty Hindu rajas of the Deccan to acknowledge his supremacy and by suppressing the revolts of some of his Moslem officers; measures which were accompanied by a politic leniency and rewarded by peace from rebellion for the rest of his reign.

Bahman had made the city of Gulbarga (renamed Ahsanabad) his capital, and as soon as his authority had been firmly established he organized the government of the kingdom in four provinces: Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar, and Muhammadan Telingana.

He then entered upon the third phase of his rule and extended his dominions by conquest westward to Goa and Dabhol and eastward into Hindu Telingana. During his invasion of Gujarat in 1357 he fell ill of a surfeit of wine and venison and returned to his capital to die in 1358.

Bahman was succeeded by his eldest son Muhammad I, a king whose administrative ability was as outstanding as the unmeasured ferocity with which he waged almost incessant war against his powerful Hindu neighbours.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 170 and footnote, and pp. 372, 373.

The institutions which he organized lasted throughout the reigns of his successors and were adopted by the rulers of the five States into which the Deccan eventually became broken. Muhammad ruled his kingdom with the assistance of eight Ministers of State: the Lieutenant of the Kingdom, the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Assistant Minister of Finance, the Peshwa (who ultimately absorbed the office of Lieutenant of the Kingdom), the Kotwal (Chief of Police and City Magistrate of the capital), and the Chief Justice who acted as Minister of Religion and Endowments.

The four provincial governors collected the revenue, raised and controlled the fighting forces, and made all the civil and military appointments in their provinces. The king maintained his authority by the annual royal progresses instituted by Muhammad and continued by his successors. But this autocratic form of dominion status depended entirely upon the personal factor, the character of the king himself and the loyalty of the governors; and this decentralization led finally to the dismemberment of the kingdom. Provincial rebellions eventually became frequent and in Muhammad's own lifetime the Governor of the Daulatabad province raised a revolt which was put down with difficulty. Highway robbery, which at one time threatened to become a serious problem, was suppressed by indiscriminate massacre.

Muhammad's reign marked the beginning of the almost continuous warfare waged between the Bahmani kings and the rajas of Vijayanagar.

A purely domestic financial measure taken by Muhammad was the original cause of the earliest hostilities which led directly to the slaughter of 400,000 Hindus of both sexes. Bahman had issued hardly any gold coinage, and Muhammad for religious and political reasons substituted gold from his own mint for the Hindu currency which had previously been used throughout the Deccan. Bukka I of Vijayanagar and Kanhayya of Warangal resented this measure, and in the face of repeated warnings incited the Hindu bankers of the Deccan to melt down the new gold and hoard it. Muhammad met this by decreeing the execution, on a given day in the summer

of 1360, of every Hindu banker and money-changer in the kingdom. Bukka and Kanhayya then declared war.

Apart from the sickening horrors of the general massacres which followed Muhammad's victories in Vijayanagar in 1366-67, these campaigns are memorable for the first mention in Indian history of the use of artillery, when the King of the Deccan took the guns from his forts and turned them into elephant batteries, manned by European and Ottoman Turkish artillerymen.<sup>1</sup>

Atrocities were met by reprisals, and finally a convention was made between Muhammad and Bukka that non-combatants should in future be spared. Though sometimes violated, this agreement went a long way to mitigate the horrors of war until it was broken by the Hindus more than fifty years later.

In 1367 Muhammad completed the great mosque of Gulbarga which possesses the only roofed-in courtyard to a mosque to be found in India. But the outstanding feature of Bahmani architecture is the fortification of their strongholds,<sup>2</sup> for the kingdom was surrounded by powerful enemies, the rajas of Vijayanagar, Telingana and Orissa, the Gonds, and the Sultans of Khandesh, Malwa and Gujarat. Nothing in Northern India is to be compared with the immense strength and ingenuity of the fortifications of Daulatabad, a fortress with an outer wall  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles in circumference, and whose only entrance, a rock-hewn tunnel, was defended by charcoal fumes. In their general appearance the Deccan forts resemble the military architecture of medieval Europe and may perhaps have been planned by Turkish and other foreign mercenaries who served in the armies of the Deccan kings.

Muhammad I died in 1377 and was succeeded by his son Mujahid, who continued hostilities against Vijayanagar until Muhammad II. his murder a year later. Muhammad II, a grandson of Bahman Shah, who followed him on the throne, was a lover of peace and of literature and the friend of the great Persian poet Hafiz. There were no foreign wars during his nineteen years' reign,

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 381 and footnote.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed descriptions of Deccan military engineering of the period see *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. Ch. XXIII. pp. 631-633, by Sir John Marshall.

and the peace of the kingdom was broken only by the unsuccessful revolt of the Governor of the Sagar Province.

Between 1387 and 1395 a severe famine visited the Deccan and Muhammad took prompt and able relief measures. Transport arrangements were made for the distribution of grain from Malwa and Gujarat, which was sold at low rates but only to Muhammadans, and the king established free schools for orphans at a number of centres, where the children were taught, housed and fed at the cost of the State. The day after Muhammad's death in 1397, Saif-ud-din Ghorî, the faithful minister of the founder of the Bahmani dynasty and of his successors, followed his master to the grave at the age of over a hundred.

Six months of the year 1397 saw two successive kings of a disordered country before Firoz Shah, a cousin of Muhammad II, ascended the throne in November. As a young man Firoz was endowed with a splendid constitution and a fine intellect, but these he undermined by hard drinking and the pleasures of the harem. Kindly and generous by nature he brought his Brahman subjects into high government posts, but his bigoted zeal to stamp out "infidelity" abroad plunged him into incessant and impolitic warfare with his Hindu neighbours. The historian Firishta states that the Bahmani kingdom reached the height of its power during his reign. But Firoz, worn out by his debaucheries by the time he was forty, let the affairs of the kingdom fall into the hands of two freed Turki slaves. At the age of fifty-two, overwhelmed by his final and disastrous campaign against Vijayanagar in 1422, he abdicated in favour of his younger brother Ahmad, and met an instant and violent end.

Ahmad Shah had proved his skill as a commander at Ellichpur against the Gonds in 1399 and during the disastrous Pangul campaign just before his accession. He soon made the Raja of Vijayanagar and his unfortunate subjects bitterly repent of their breach of the humane convention of 1367. Infuriated by the Hindu atrocities he had then witnessed he marched through the Hindu kingdom slaughtering men by the 20,000 and enslaving women and children wholesale. Two of the humiliating conditions

of peace which Raja Vira Vijaya was forced to accept were the payment of an enormous sum as tribute, which the raja's son, "with every appearance of delight," had to bring on the royal elephants to Ahmad's camp; and the retention by the Moslems of an immense number of Hindu captives.

Among these prisoners were two Brahmans who became Muham-madans and subsequently rose to high positions. One of them, Fathullah, became Governor of Berar and founded the independent dynasty of that State when the Deccan kingdom broke up. The other, known as Hassan, intrigued his way to the lieutenancy of the kingdom and left a son Ahmad, who founded about the year 1490 the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar, one of the five kingdoms of the Deccan; a State which kept its independence for just over a hundred years.

Ahmad Shah's foreign policy was invariably aggressive and generally ill-advised. In 1424 he annexed Telingana and created a source of continuous trouble. His disastrous attempts to conquer Gujerat four years later only led to a humiliating peace.

An outstanding domestic event of the reign was the removal of the capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, then the seat of a provincial government. The ancient capital of Vidarbha, now renamed Ahmadabad Bidar, stood on a tableland 2500 feet above sea-level, the most beautiful and the healthiest site in the Deccan. By 1432 the new citadel was completed, and before the Bahmani dynasty came to an end many impressive buildings had sprung up in the city. One of these was Ahmad's own tomb, with its Persian painting and its inscriptions in gold on deep blue and vermilion.

But the most important feature of Ahmad's home policy was his lavish employment of alien troops. The Indian climate is highly injurious to settlers from colder countries, and the mixed marriages which are bound to follow accentuate this deterioration in the race. The constant stream of immigration from Central Asia kept up the standard of the conquerors in the north. But the Deccan was isolated, and the domiciled ruling race had perpetually to bring in fresh blood to furnish their best soldiers and administrators. Bahman's

chief ministers were an Afghan and a Persian, but Ahmad Shah was the first Deccan king to enlist foreign recruits for his army in large numbers, and this started the long and bitter feud between Deccanis and foreigners.

Ahmad's powers had been failing for some time, and he died about 1435 at the age of sixty-four. He was succeeded by his son Ala-ud-din Ahmad.

Ala-ud-din's reign which lasted twenty-two years witnessed the usual hostilities against Vijayanagar, while the Deccan government was shaken by the growing feuds between the Deccani Muhammadans and the Abyssinian settlers, who were chiefly Sunnis, and the foreign element, Arabs, Turks, Persians and Moguls, who were mostly Shias. In the course of what amounted to civil war the Deccanis killed by an act of treachery 1200 Sayyids, 1000 other foreigners, five or six thousand children and seized the wives, daughters and goods of their victims. But in the end the foreigners triumphed, for the king, emerging from a drunken seclusion in his harem, dismissed his Deccani officials.

The war with Vijayanagar in 1443 was far from being a one-sided campaign although it ended in favour of the Deccani kingdom. Devaraya II had reorganized the rabble of 200,000 mounted men and 800,000 foot which represented the army of Vijayanagar by recruiting a large number of Moslems and creating a force of 10,000 mounted foreign archers, 60,000 Hindu cavalry and 300,000 comparatively well-trained infantry.

Ala-ud-din died in 1458 and was succeeded by his eldest son Humayun, one of the most bestial fiends who ever sat on a throne. Of the sickening tale of the tortures Humayun delighted to inflict on innocent and guilty alike one example is enough. While Humayun was away in Telingana suppressing a Hindu revolt a rising took place in Ahmadabad, which the Kotwal did his best to put down, and the king returned to his capital by forced marches to restore order. He put to death by torture the garrison of more than three thousand men whom he considered had failed him, while the Kotwal was publicly confined in an iron

cage and given for food portions of his own body which were cut off daily until he died. The fate of the rebels themselves, their wives and families is better left undescribed.

Throughout Humayun's reign the "talons of his tortures" fell on Hindu and Moslem alike; women were butchered to make a royal holiday; or the wives and children of his subjects were forcibly abducted to satisfy his lust. But at length "God, the Most High, the Most Merciful and the Succour of them that seek aid answered the prayerful cries of His people" and in 1461 Humayun died, stabbed to death, so it is recorded, by an African maidservant when he was helpless with drink.

On Humayun's death the floodgates of invasion opened upon the Deccan kingdom, to which his infant son Nizam Shah had nominally succeeded. The Hindu armies of Orissa and Telingana penetrated to within twenty miles of the capital before they were driven back, only to be reinforced by an invading host from Malwa. The Deccan was saved and the invaders expelled by the prompt action of the foreigner Mahmud Gavan, the greatest statesman the Bahmani kings ever had and a remarkably able general. Nizam Shah died suddenly in 1463 and his brother aged nine ascended the throne as Muhammad III.

The queen-mother acted as regent until her son was sixteen, with Mahmud Gavan as chief minister; and although *Muhammad III.* the foreign party predominated Mahmud pursued a generous policy towards the Deccanis, and the great offices of State were fairly divided.

In 1469 Mahmud determined to suppress the pirate fleets which infested the Malabar coast<sup>1</sup> and seriously interfered with Moslem trade and pilgrim ships. He annexed the territories of the Konkan rajas concerned and by a combined naval and military operation took Goa, then one of the chief ports in the kingdom of Vijayanagar. He

<sup>1</sup> Athanasius Nikitin, a Russian merchant who came to India by sea from Ormuz about this time mentions this scourge, which persisted from the days of the Roman sea trade until it was finally dealt with by the East India Company. For Nikitin's Diary see *India in the Fifteenth Century*.

did not return in triumph to the capital till 1472. In the same year Belgaum was annexed.

A year later the Deccan was devastated by a terrible famine in which large numbers of people died of hunger and cholera, and the kingdom was further depopulated by wholesale emigrations to Gujarat and Malwa.

A rising in Telingana at the end of 1477 which Muhammad dealt with in person led to an exploit as remarkable for sheer audacity as the capture of Nadiya by Ikhtiyar-ud-din. The king was at Kondapalli when he learnt of the immense treasure of the temple of Kanchi (Conjeveram), one of the seven sacred Hindu cities, a place no Muhammadan had ever seen. Muhammad set out to raid the place, which was ten days' journey away, with 6000 picked cavalry. On the last stage he rode so hard that he arrived at the temple gates with only forty men. But these were enough. The king killed the gigantic Hindu leader in single mounted combat, his party dealt with the Brahman guards, and the temple was plundered.

The Deccan kingdom now extended westward to the sea coast, while on the east the old provinces of Gulbarga and Daulatabad had been greatly enlarged and Telingana had considerably more than doubled in size. The provinces as organized by Bahman Shah had become unmanageable, and in 1480 Muhammad partitioned each of the original provinces. At the same time the powers of the provincial satraps were considerably curtailed, all military appointments with the exception of the command of the principal provincial fortress were resumed by the king, and a system of control and inspection was introduced. These reforms were highly unpopular amongst the older nobility, who saw the wealth and authority of the governors diminished and the opportunities for speculation greatly restricted. The eight provincial governorships were allotted fairly among the two factions, Africans being put in charge of two of them.

Whilst the dismemberment of the kingdom is to be attributed to the Bahmani system of decentralization the immediate cause was the shocking crime which sullied the end of Muhammad's reign. The king had started life under every possible advantage, with a wise mother and one of the greatest Moslem statesmen of India to guide



him. But he had become a confirmed drunkard, and the Deccani party who hated the Persian leader of the foreigners awaited their opportunity when the king was intoxicated to show him a highly treasonable letter to the Raja of Orissa over Mahmud Gavan's seal. The letter was a palpable forgery, but Muhammad, without making any inquiry and refusing to listen to his minister's defence and protestations of innocence, ordered him to instant execution.

Mahmud Gavan had served the Bahmani kings with unswerving devotion for thirty-five years, and he was seventy-eight years old at the time of his murder in 1481. In the council chamber he had filled the highest office with wisdom and justice and he had shown in the field the greatest skill and courage. His private life, in which he showed himself to be a devout Sunni Moslem, had been consistently one of kindness and generosity. When the king sent for the dead minister's treasurer he found that, with all his opportunities, Mahmud Gavan had left no fortune. His great income as he received it had all been spent in charity.

Among his many endowments was the splendid college in the Persian style which he built at Bidar nine years before his death, with its great mosque and library, lecture halls, professors' quarters, and students' cubicles ranged round an open courtyard, all planned for convenience and comfort and amply provided with light and air.<sup>1</sup>

Retribution fell swiftly upon the king. The foreigners and the more respectable members of the Deccani party would have no more to do with him and, overwhelmed with remorse and grief, he drank himself to death within a year. He was just twenty-eight.

Muhammad Shah was succeeded in 1482 by his son the boy King Mahmud, who grew up a pleasure-seeking debauchee.

*End of Bahmani  
Dynasty.*

The government was in the hands of Qasim Barid-ul-Mamalik, a Turk who had joined the Deccani faction; the State was rent by the plots of the opposing parties; and the provincial governors one after another asserted their independence. The kingdom had departed from the Bahmani house and when Mahmud died in 1518, worn out with his excesses, all that remained

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. pp. 635-636. Sir John Marshall discusses the Deccan architecture in detail, pp. 629-636.

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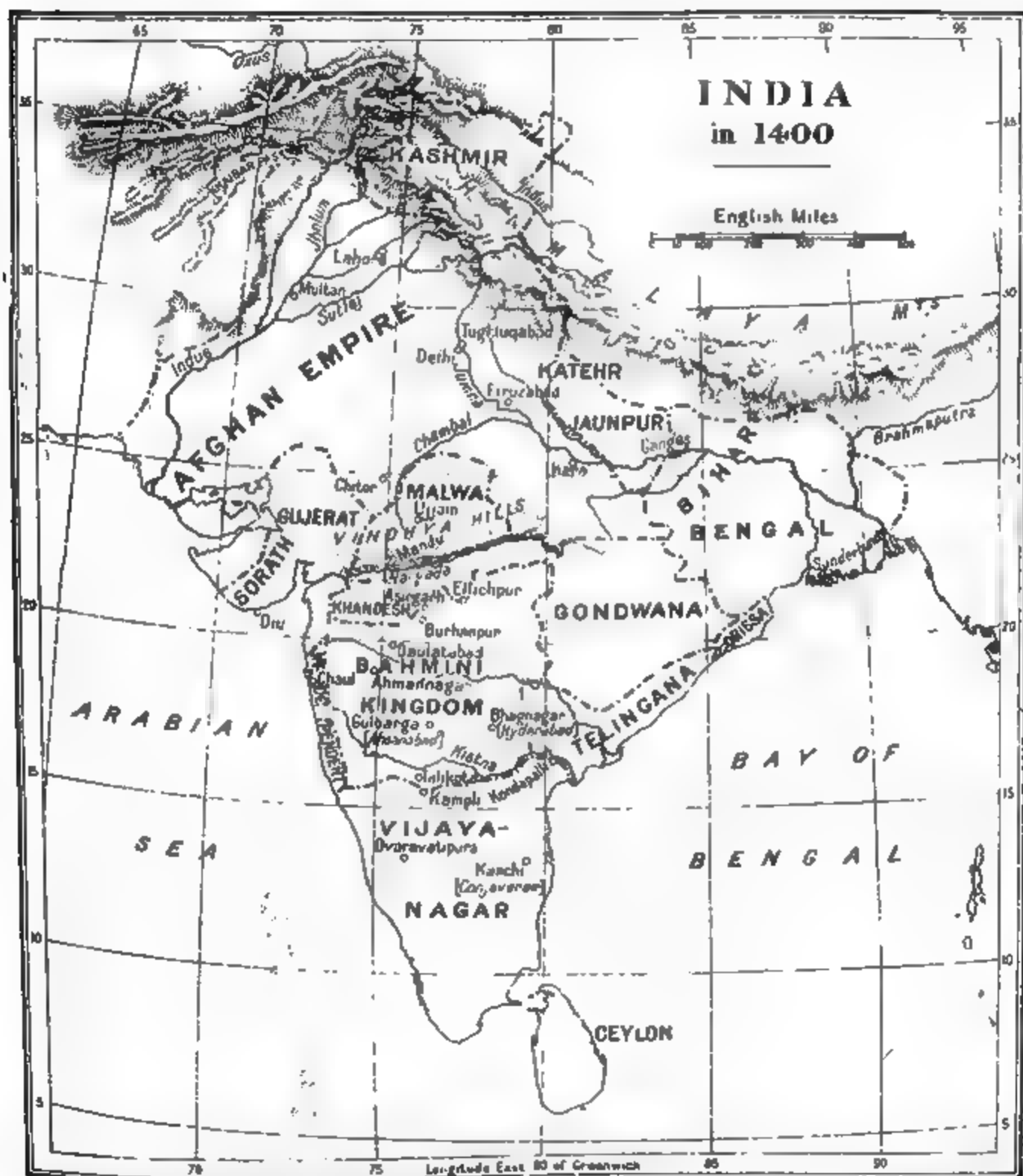
was the country around the capital. Kalimullah, the last of a dynasty which had dwindled into a succession of puppet kings, fled; Amir Abi Barid set himself upon the throne of Bidar; and the history of the five turbulent, ambitious and treacherous kingdoms of the Deccan began.

Bijapur, the most important of the five kingdoms of the Deccan, was founded by Adil Shah. If Firishta is to be believed he was the son of Sultan Murad II of Turkey, saved from a general massacre of the royal children and smuggled out of the country.<sup>1</sup> He was certainly sold as a slave to Khvaja Mahmud Gavan, the great Deccan minister, and afterwards rose to a provincial governorship. In 1490 he joined with the Governors of Ahmadnagar and Berar, when they asserted the independence of their respective provinces in those words of the Koran which describe so much of Indian history: "The sword for him who can wield it, and dominion to him who conquers."

Acting upon this principle Adil Shah engaged in frequent warfare with his Moslem and Hindu neighbours until his death from dropsy at the age of seventy-five in 1510. The only notable domestic event of the reign, and it almost cost him his throne, was the attempt to impose the Shia form of religion on his Sunni subjects. Early in his rule the king married the daughter of a Maratha chief, and he freely appointed Hindus to high government offices. Adil Shah appears to have been a man of considerable attainments, a skilful musician and devoted to literature; in character he was wise, just and conscientious. But towards the end of his life the control of affairs passed into the hands of his treacherous minister Kamal Khan Deccani, while the country was invaded by the Portuguese, who seized his newly-won port of Goa in February 1510. The place changed hands three times during the year, but Adil Shah was dead before de Albuquerque finally took it in November and, exasperated by his losses, massacred the Moslem inhabitants.

Alliances in the Deccan were made as rapidly as they were afterwards broken. In 1515 and again in 1520 Adil Shah's son

<sup>1</sup> *Mahomedan Power in India*, Vol. III. Section II Ch. III. pp. 4-8, where the story with its "strong corroborating facts" is given in detail.





Isma'il attacked the Portuguese, being badly defeated in the first campaign, but winning back the mainland of Goa, though not the island, in the second. But between these operations when Bijapur was invaded by Krishna of Vijayanagar Portuguese troops fought on the Moslem side. The Hindus were victorious and took 400 guns, 100 elephants and 4000 horses. Isma'il Adil Shah's reign, which began with the Portuguese war and an abortive plot against the throne by the regent Kamal Khan, ran what was then the normal course of incessant fighting. He died at the age of thirty-seven in 1534.

Mallu, the licentious son of Isma'il was deposed and blinded by his outraged nobles after a reign of six months, and in 1535 his brother Ibrahim Adil Shah I became king.

*Bijapur and Vijayanagar.* His chief adviser was Khusru Lari, a Turkish foreigner of outstanding ability who was given the title of Asad Khan and the great fief of Belgaum. One of the first acts of the reign, however, was to expel almost all the foreigners and replace them in the government and in the army by Deccanis and Abyssinians. A state visit to Vijayanagar in 1535, and wars with that kingdom and his Deccan neighbours sums up Ibrahim's foreign policy. He died in 1557<sup>1</sup> as the direct result of hard drinking and debauchery.

His son Ali, unlike his father, was a Shia and an intolerant bigot. But he made an alliance with the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar against his Moslem neighbour Ahmadnagar in 1558, when the two armies devastated that country and "left no cruelty unpractised." Six years later the four Deccan kingdoms of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Bidar and Golconda combined to break the formidable Hindu power which dominated the south. Talikota, one of the decisive battles of India, was fought on 23rd January 1565, the splendid city of Vijayanagar met the fate of Carthage, and with the overthrow of the great Hindu kingdom Muhammadan supremacy in the Deccan was assured.

In 1570 Ali made an alliance with Murtaza Nizam, Shah of Ahmadnagar and the Hindu Zamorin of Calicut, to expel the Portuguese from India. But the attempt was frustrated by the splendid courage and tenacity of the Viceroy Dom Luiz de Atayde, helped by

<sup>1</sup> Authority: Firishta. *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 444, gives 1558.

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the dissensions of his enemies. Chaul with its garrison of 3000 was besieged for nine months by an army of 150,000 men. Goa was invested in even greater force, but its defenders who at first numbered 1600 and were only later increased to 4000 eventually forced the invaders to raise the siege with a loss of 12,000 men and 300 elephants. Not only did Dom Luiz during the crisis send reinforcements to outlying places which were being attacked, but he despatched the annual fleet of merchantmen to Portugal, and finally carried the war successfully into the enemy's country. Ali Adil Shah was killed in 1579 at a moment of disgusting debauchery. Bijapur was finally absorbed in the Mogul empire in 1686.

The Adil Shahi dynasty left its mark in India by the creation of the magnificent monuments at Bijapur in which the native art of the Deccan, as evolved by Indian artists and craftsmen, rises above the Persian influence evident in the buildings of the Bahmani rulers.<sup>1</sup>

Ahmadnagar, which became one of the Deccan kingdoms in 1490 under Ahmad Nizam-ul-Malik, the son of a Vijayanagar Brahman, was ruled from 1508 until 1553 by Burhan Nizam Shah I, who ascended the throne at the age of seven. The government during the minority was carried on by the able minister Muhammad Khan Deccani. In 1521 Burhan gave the Portuguese permission to build a factory at Chaul, and six years later entered into an alliance with them against the State of Gujarat. In the course of this campaign the Gujarat fleet was completely destroyed. The by no means invariably successful wars waged by Burhan Nizam Shah and his successors, and the far from edifying deaths of the majority of the earlier kings can be found in the pages of *Firishta*. Ahmadnagar did not become part of the Mogul Empire until 1637 during the reign of Shahjahan.

In 1490<sup>2</sup> Berar broke away from the Bahmani kingdom under its provincial governor Fathullah Imad-ul-Mulk Deccani, a convert from Hinduism; Imad Shahi kings ruled the country until it was annexed by Ahmadnagar in 1574.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 637.

<sup>2</sup> Or 1484. (*Oxford History of India*, V. A. Smith, p. 286.)

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The province of Golconda which threw off its allegiance to the Bahmanis between 1512 and 1518, was the old Telingana kingdom ruled until the beginning of the fourteenth century by the Hindu kings of the Narupati dynasty. It had been brought under the suzerainty of Delhi by Ala-ud-din Khalji in 1346, and once more came under Moslem suzerainty ten years later, after the invasion of Muhammad I of the Deccan in 1365. As an independent kingdom under the Qutb Shahi dynasty, it enjoyed considerable prosperity. The old Hindu irrigation works had been kept in repair, the country was fertile and Hindus were able to rise to high office in the government. The administration was in general good, from the days of its first independent ruler, Quli Qutb Shah, to its eighth and last, Abu'l Hassan, who came to the throne in 1672. Long before this time, however, the Deccan kingdoms, utterly incapable through mutual jealousy of showing a united front, had begun to fall one by one before the steady advance of the Mogul Empire, and Golconda itself was annexed by Aurangzib in 1687. During the reign of Ibrahim (1550-80), the court, which had been moved from Warangal to Golconda by Quli Qutb, was established at Bhagnagar, renamed Hyderabad and is now, as the capital of the Nizam's dominions with a population of half a million people, the fourth largest city in India.

Besides the kingdoms of the Deccan there were other independent States stretching across the middle of India from east to west to which reference must be made.

On the Bay of Bengal lay the State of Orissa, a Hindu outpost against the Moslem Governors of Bengal. It had been invaded by Firuz Tughluq in 1360 and made to pay tribute to Delhi. Orissa kept its independence in spite of formidable Moslem incursions, and in 1435 the enterprising and ambitious ruler Kapilesvaradeva ascended the throne. He extended his sway southwards along the coast, and even menaced Vijayanagar, which was preoccupied with its incessant hostilities against the Deccan kingdom. It was not until 1516 that Krishna, the greatest of the Vijayanagar kings, succeeded in winning back the territory

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which had been lost, and established the Kistna River as the boundary between the two kingdoms. Orissa kept its independence until it was taken by Akbar in 1592.

The forest region between Orissa and Berar inhabited by the primitive tribes of Gonds was then known as *Gondwana*. Gondwana and divided into four kingdoms. The richest was the most northern, Garha-Mandla, which towards the end of the fifteenth century was greatly enlarged at the expense of its neighbours in the Narbada Valley. Deogarh and Khula were the most aggressive, and from the latter had come Narsingh who united many of the tribes and invaded Berar in 1398; the original cause of subsequent Muhammadan expeditions. The greatest and most wisely ruled Gond kingdom was Chanda in the south, with a long line of rulers whose policy was to avoid war. Gondwana was conquered, plundered and annexed by Asaf Khan, Akbar's Governor of Kara, when the famous and stout-hearted Queen Rani Durgavati was ruling the Garha country.

Malwa had formed the most southern portion of Harsha's dominions, and in the first half of the eleventh century was ruled by the celebrated King Bhoja Paramara. In 1234 Iltutmish invaded the country, sacked Ujjain and demolished the famous Hindu temple of Mahakali. Other Moslem incursions followed, but Malwa was not annexed until 1305 when Ain-ul-Mulk subdued it for his master Ala-ud-din.

After the invasion of Timur Lang had shattered the central government, Dilavar Khan Ghorî the Afghan Governor of Malwa shook off his allegiance to Delhi. The Ghorî and Khaljî dynasties ruled the country for about a hundred and thirty years, and then, in 1531, Bahadur of Gujarat defeated Mahmud II the last Khaljî and took possession of Malwa, a circumstance entirely due to Mahmud himself, whose tortuous and aggressive policy severed the old friendship between the two countries.

Hushang Shah Ghurî (1405-35) and Mahmud I Khaljî raised the splendid Jamî Masjid and the massive Darbar Hall<sup>1</sup> in Mandu, the ancient capital, with its twenty-five miles of grey embattled walls crowning the steep edge of a spur of the Vindhya hills. But within

<sup>1</sup> See *Camb Hist India*, Vol. III. pp. 617-622.



the walls there is now a choking forest of pipal, banyan, baobul and teak, amidst which rise the great mosques and palaces and tombs of sandstone and marble—all that remain of what is still the most striking fortress city of India.

The independence of Gujarat, as a State under Moslem rule, was established by Zafar Khan (Muzaffar I), the son of a *Gujarat*. Rajput convert who was sent by Muhammad Tughlak to suppress a rebellion in the province in 1391 and set himself up as king in 1396. The subsequent rise of the kingdom was due to Muzaffar's grandson Ahmad Shah (1411-42), a determined and energetic ruler who engaged in frequent and successful war with his neighbours. He built Ahmadabad, still the chief city of Gujarat, soon after his accession. But the greatest king of the dynasty was Mahmud I Begarha,<sup>1</sup> who showed the strength of his character by his personal courage and decision in stamping out a formidable conspiracy when he came to the throne as a boy of thirteen in 1458. Mahmud is one of the great masters of war in Indian history, and the victories which extended his dominions included campaigns in Cutch and Kathiawar and the conquest of the Hindu State of Champaner.

Gujarat with its long-established and flourishing trade and its many harbours, had made itself strong at sea, and with the arrival of the Portuguese upon the coast a collision between the two powers was inevitable. After the allied Moslem fleet had been destroyed off Diu in 1509 by Almeida, Mahmud made peace with the Portuguese. He died in 1511. Mahmud was in every way a born ruler. Tall and of striking appearance with a beard to his waist, he never allowed himself to be swayed by the whisperings of the harem, and his word was law with his ministers.

Muzaffar II succeeded and reigned until 1526, dying on 7th April, thirteen days before Babar won the battle of Panipat. With his fleet he was able to resist the attempts of the Portuguese to capture Diu, while he led his armies, amongst other campaigns, to the help

<sup>1</sup> The derivation of the nickname Begarha is *be garh*, meaning "two forts," and refers to his capture of the two great Hindu strongholds of Girnar and Champaner (*Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 316).

of Mahmud II of Malwa when his government had fallen into the hands of Rajput officers. Mandu was stormed in 1518, its Rajput defenders immolated themselves in the rite of *jauhar*, and the surviving Rajput inhabitants of the city to the number of nineteen thousand were butchered.

On Muzaffar's death the nobles split into three factions supporting the respective claims of the late king's elder sons, Sikandar, Bahadur, and Latif Khan.

Sikandar, the first-born and his father's nominated heir, was feeble and incompetent. He was promptly assassinated and Mahmud, an infant son of Muzaffar's, was proclaimed the nominal king on 12th April 1526. But Bahadur, who is said<sup>1</sup> to have been present as a spectator at Panipat, returned to Gujarat and assumed the kingship on 11th July. His infant brother was secretly murdered within the year, a revolt by Latif Khan ended in the death of that claimant, and Bahadur had made himself the unquestioned King of Gujarat.

In the almost ceaseless wars of the reign, Bahadur met with considerable success. Malwa was annexed in 1531, and in 1534 he stormed the Rajput stronghold of Chitor. The place had been gallantly defended by the queen mother Jawahir Bai, who was killed when leading a sortie; the infant heir Udai Singh was taken to a place of safety; and the surviving Rajputs committed *jauhar*. Thirteen thousand women, according to the legend, perished in the flames while their men, led by Baghji, Prince of Deola, rushed down the great breach to die sword in hand.

The taking of Chitor marks the turning-point in Bahadur's fortunes. Humayun had succeeded Babur at Delhi in 1530, and for a time relations were friendly between the two Moslem kingdoms. But a quarrel over a Timurid fugitive to Gujarat led to the invasion of that country by Humayun in 1535. Bahadur deserted his army and fled, finally escaping by taking ship to Diu. In the meanwhile a rebellion had broken out in Bengal, Humayun was obliged to retire and Bahadur regained his kingdom.

In 1534, before the invasion of his country, Bahadur had ceded the

<sup>1</sup> By Abu Turab, a contemporary writer (*Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 322). Firishtha only says that "Bahadur Khan was near Delhi."

island of Bassein to the Portuguese, and during the crisis he offered a factory site in Diu in exchange for the services of 500 European troops. The contingent was not forthcoming and Bahadur began to negotiate with the Viceroy Nino da Cunha for the Portuguese withdrawal from Diu. He eventually consented to visit da Cunha on his flagship, and the one certain fact which emerges from two conflicting stories is that Bahadur was drowned in Diu harbour on the 13th February 1537.

The utter confusion both as regards the succession of the later rulers of Gujarat and the disorder of the kingdom may be read in the pages of Firishta. The country was taken over by Akbar in 1572 during the chaotic reign of Muzaffar Shah III.

The architecture of the great Moslem buildings of Gujarat was founded upon the highest traditions of the Khalji school as it existed when the province broke off from Delhi. This is to be seen in such buildings as the Jami Masjid at Ahmadabad, which Sir John Marshall has described<sup>1</sup> "as one of the most superb, as it is also one of the most imposing structures of its class in the world." During the reign of Mahmud Begarha the architecture of Gujarat entered upon its most magnificent stage. Mahmud founded three new cities and enriched his capital of Ahmadabad with many splendid buildings.

The small kingdom of Khandesh in the Tapti Valley owed its importance to the strength of its fortress Asirgarh. *Khandesh.* Khandesh won its independence through the resistance of Malik Ahmad Khan to the Bahmani power of the Deccan about the year 1380. He founded the Faruqi dynasty, and the name Khandesh is derived from the title of Khan, which these rulers assumed. The capital of the country was Burhanpur. Sometime a dependency of its powerful neighbour Gujarat, the State remained in existence until Akbar took Asirgarh in 1601.

To the south of all these States and occupying the whole of the lower extremity of the peninsula, a Hindu power, the *Vijayanagar.* greatest since the days of Harsha, held its own from the middle of the fourteenth century for more than two hundred years.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. Ch. XXIII, where the architecture of the kingdom is discussed (pp. 608-616).

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Muhammad Tughluq had been a menace to the very existence of Hindu religion and civilization in the south until his blind policy of aggression was checked by the successful rebellion of 1334 in Madura, which converted that province into a disordered kingdom. The third king to fight his way to the throne of Madura in 1340 was Ghiyas-ud-din Damaghani, or Damaghan Shah, who had served as a trooper in the Delhi army. Damaghan Shah, a brutal tyrant who delighted in the wholesale massacre and torture of Hindu captives—men, women and children—continued the war against Vira Ballala III, the last great Hoysala king and the one existing bulwark against the Muhammadan conquest of Southern India.

*Origin of the Kingdom* Vira Ballala was defeated at the battle of Trichinopoly in 1342, and the old man of eighty was taken prisoner and strangled by the victor, who hung the stuffed skin of the raja, in the best Delhi manner, on the ramparts of Madura. Vira Ballala's son appears also to have died in battle, but the spirit of the old king lived on in five brothers, the sons of Sangama of Anagundi, who were officers on the Hindu northern frontier. The Hindu people of Southern India groaning under alien rule and religious persecution found their leaders in Sangama's sons; the movement was inspired by the Brahman sage Vidyaranya and the kingdom of Vijayanagar was founded.

Less than ten years after the establishment of the Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan, which took place in 1347, a Hindu power had arisen in the south so formidable that Bahman Shah's trusty minister Saif-ud-din Ghuri dissuaded his master from attacking it.

*Capital of Vijayanagar.* At the time of Bahman Shah's death in 1358 Bukka alone survived of Sangama's sons and the mantle of the Hoysalas descended on him. The capital of his kingdom was Vijayanagar, the fortress city on the rocky heights above the Tungabhadra which Vira Ballala III had built six years before his death; and throughout the many invasions from the Deccan which swept the country, the great stronghold with its seven-fold walls was never taken until a coalition of four of the Deccan kingdoms utterly destroyed it in 1565. An intimate account of

Vijayanagar has been given by Ab-dur Razzaq,<sup>1</sup> who was sent there on a mission by Shah Rukh of Samarkand in 1442. His account of the magnificence of the court from the king downwards with its courtesans, dancers, jugglers and the performing elephants which particularly took his fancy, might easily be taken for a description from the *Arabian Nights*.

The sanguinary struggle between the Hindu and Muhammadan powers, which lasted as long as the kingdom of Vijayanagar was in being, began when Firoz Shah Tughlak announced his policy of non-interference in the affairs of the south, and this danger to both States no longer existed. The history of Vijayanagar consists almost entirely of the wars with the Deccan, but in 1371 Bukka I defeated and swept away the Moslem dynasty of Madura. He died seven years later and was succeeded by Harihara II,<sup>2</sup> the first of the line to assume the royal title. Two kings, both named Devaraya, followed, and at the accession of Devaraya II (1421-48) the kingdom was at the height of the prosperity which it reached under the first dynasty.

Nicolo Conti, a Venetian of noble family who travelled in India a little before 1440, gives the following impressions of his visit to Vijayanagar, which he calls Bizenegalia<sup>3</sup>: "The circumference of the city is sixty miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclose the valleys at their foot. . . . In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms. The inhabitants of this region marry as many wives as they please, who are burnt with their dead husbands. Their king is more powerful than all the other kings of India. He takes to himself twelve thousand wives, of whom four thousand follow him on foot . . . and are employed in the kitchen. ' like number . . . ride on horseback, the remainder carried by men in litters of whom two or three thousand are selected as his wives on condition they should voluntarily burn themselves with him, which

<sup>1</sup> Kamal-ud-din Ab-dur Razzaq as quoted in *India in the Fifteenth Century*, Hakluyt Society (London), 1857.

<sup>2</sup> Harihara I had been one of the wardens of the marches before his brother Bukka came to power.

<sup>3</sup> *India in the Fifteenth Century*, Part II.

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is considered to be a great honour for them." The wholesale sacrifice of *suttee* reached its climax in India at the obsequies of the Telugu rulers of the kingdom.

Devaraya II was followed by Mallikarjuna who repelled a combined attack by the Deccan kingdom and the Hindu State of Orissa. But the next king, his brother Virupaksha, was so hopelessly incompetent that Vijayanagar was in danger of breaking up, and Saluva Narasimha, with the help of his general Narasa, deposed him in 1487 and took over the government. This is known as the First Usurpation, and Narasimha in his six years' reign succeeded in winning back most of the rebellious provinces.

A second usurpation about the year 1505 brought chaos, but from this emerged Krishnadevaraya, son of Narasa and the greatest king of Vijayanagar, who ascended the throne in 1509. His own country was unsettled and a powerful vassal in open rebellion. Off the coast of Bijapur the guns of the Portuguese and Muhammadan fleets were in action, and the first of the European powers in India was raising the earliest Indian regiment to fight against their own countrymen. Away in the north the Lodi dynasty of Delhi, for all the energy and determination of its greatest king Sikandar, was not far from its end at the hands of the conquering army of Babar.

A Portuguese mission sent to Vijayanagar by de Albuquerque to conclude a commercial treaty and an alliance against the Zamorin of Calicut soon after Krishna's accession was the only contact between the two powers during the king's reign. Krishna's foreign policy was mainly to recover the provinces which had been lost to Orissa, and in this he had partly succeeded by 1516. Four years later, profiting by the dissensions between the Five Kingdoms of the Deccan, he annexed the Raichur Doab which had been the cause of heavy fighting with the Deccan kingdom since the days of Muhammad I, a hundred and sixty years before.

Krishna was an able general; in the course of his campaigns he temporarily occupied Bijapur and he destroyed the great fortress of Gulbarga, the original capital of the Bahmani kingdom. But in vivid contrast to so many of the successful soldiers of medieval India, he

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was merciful towards the vanquished. A zealous Hindu with strong leanings towards Vaishnavism, Krishna made most generous endowments to temples and Brahmans.

It must be remembered, however, that in those medieval times the subjects of a kingdom were held to exist solely for the benefit of their rulers, Moslem or Hindu, and the Indian peasants habitually lived in a state of misery and neglect. The usual government practice in the south was to leave the cultivator half his crop.

Athanasius Nikitin,<sup>1</sup> a merchant of Tver who visited parts of India including Bidar and Vijayanagar about the year 1470, noted in his diary: "The land is overstocked with people; but those in the country are very miserable, while the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. They are wont to be carried on their silver beds, preceded by some twenty chargers caparisoned in gold and followed by 300 men on horseback and 500 on foot, and by hornmen, ten torch-bearers and ten musicians."

The terrible ferocity of the punishments for offences against property were designed to protect the rich against the poor, and it is recorded that there were very few thieves in the country. The ruler of Vijayanagar was an absolute autocrat with an immense army under his immediate orders; and the provincial governors, apart from the obligation to remit to the royal exchequer one-half of their gross revenue, were supreme within their provinces.

Prostitution was rife; the courtesans were sometimes extremely rich and the State drew a considerable revenue from the brothels. Duelling was prevalent amongst the upper classes and eventually was taken up, to Firishta's horror, by the Muhammadans of the Deccan.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of his reign Krishna's health began to fail, and rebellion broke out in parts of the kingdom, which had to be suppressed. He died in 1530. Neither his brother Achyuta nor his nephew Sadashivaraya were strong rulers, and during the reign of the second of these kings Vijayanagar came to an end as a kingdom in 1565.

<sup>1</sup> *India in the Fifteenth Century*, Part III.

<sup>2</sup> *Firishta*, Vol. III. pp. 208-209.

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The forces of the kingdoms of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bidar, bent on the destruction of the formidable Hindu power, concentrated at Talikota, a small frontier town in Bijapur. The allied army was commanded by Hussain Nizam Shah I, whose kingdom of Ahmadnagar had been subjected to every kind of atrocity by the Hindus during the recent invasions of his country by Bijapur and Vijayanagar. The strength of the Muhammadan forces lay in their infinitely better training and discipline, in the efficiency of their cavalry and mounted archers and in the overwhelming superiority of their 600 guns commanded by the able and experienced Chalabi Rumi Khan, who had seen service in Europe.

Sadashivaraya commanded the Hindu army in person. He had under him 82,000 cavalry, 900,000 infantry, 2000 elephants and some artillery. But this huge collection of men was ill-armed and undisciplined, and if Cæsar Frederick (who visited Vijayanagar two years later) is to be believed, the issue was practically decided by the defection of 140,000 Muhammadan mercenaries serving in the Hindu army.

The Kistna flowed between the opposing forces. Husain by a skilful manœuvre crossed it without loss, and on 5th January 1565, with the river behind him, fought what is known as the battle of Talikota.

The tactics on both sides were simple.<sup>1</sup> Chalabi Khan had disposed his artillery in three lines according to calibre, and covered them with 2000 foreign archers who had orders to fall back when the enemy approached. The Hindus opened with matchlocks and rockets and then advanced upon the guns. They were repulsed but they came on again, and Chalabi Khan met the second attack by loading his heavy pieces with bags of copper coins, which in the Deccan were lumps of metal and equal to modern shrapnel. The effect at point-blank range was decisive and the Bijapur cavalry, supported by elephants, charged the shattered columns through the gaps between the guns. As the Hindus fell back Sadashivaraya was taken prisoner

<sup>1</sup> For further details of the battle see *Firishta*, Vol. III. pp. 126-130 and pp. 246-249.



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and instantly beheaded, and at the sight of their leader's head on a Moslem pike the huge army completely gave way.

A hundred thousand Hindus were killed in the battle and the rout which followed. The booty taken by the men of the victorious army was enormous, the city of Vijayanagar was completely destroyed, and the country plundered for the next six months. The great Hindu power of the south was broken into a number of petty Hindu States, of which the most important was that of the Nayaks of Madura.

Conquest through the gateways of the north-west had been frequent in Indian history. While Persians and Greeks, Scythians, Kushanas and Huns had swept into the plains to become absorbed in the country, two invasions, or series of invasions, had permanently impressed their character upon India.

*Results of Invasion.* Through the colour bar which developed the caste system the Aryans kept themselves from being submerged in the great mass of the Dravidian population. Dravidian culture and ideas steadfastly survived in the southern portion of the peninsula, and the proportion of true Aryan blood is small throughout India today and hardly exists at all in some provinces. But the Aryans succeeded in absorbing the Dravidians in the lower castes of Hinduism, including what are now called the Depressed Classes, the "untouchables" who comprise at the present time about 30 per cent. of the total Hindu population of all India, and either follow degrading occupations or represent the aboriginal tribes.

The uncompromising faith of Islam thrust its way through the warring States of India like a sword. The Muhammadans trampled under foot the images of the hated religion they were unable to destroy, and as time went on the Moslems greatly increased in numbers. On the heels of the original invaders came an unending stream of subsequent immigrants; there were countless conversions, either forced or due to the missions of great Muhammadan saints and teachers; and there was the steady increase caused by the inter-marriage of the old and new Muhammadans. But the Hindus had built up an unscalable wall in the caste system which so utterly

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denies the theory of human equality as taught (if not invariably applied) by Islam as well as by Christianity.

Sir Theodore Morison has said <sup>1</sup> of the 77 million Muhammadans of all India today: "Some are descendants of the Arabs, Afghans and Turks who came down from the heights of Central Asia in successive waves of conquest, but the greater number are by blood natives of the soil, high-born Rajputs, hard-working Sudras, or lowly outcasts. . . . When these Indians had once become members of the great brotherhood of Islam they adopted the civilization of Baghdad and Shiraz and drew their ideas from the literature of Arabia and Persia. . . . These Moslem invaders and converts were not merged in the general population but remained a distinct people . . . proud of their political ascendancy and their superior civilization."

These were the results of the invasions through the north-western passes. Never once, in three thousand years, had the country been attacked by sea, but twenty-seven years before Babar led his army through the Khyber Pass, a new era of European intrusion and ultimate supremacy broke upon the western shores of India.

Inspired by the resolve to end the Venetian and Goanese monopoly of the Indian trade which reached Europe through the Levant, a Portuguese sea-captain, Bartholomeu Diaz de Novaes, rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487, and on the 17th May 1498 Vasco da Gama with his three ships, not one of them more than 150 tons burden, anchored near Calicut, where he was well received by the Hindu zamorin.

The discovery of the direct sea route to India had the most profound effect upon the civilized world, while its immediate result was to make Portugal during the sixteenth century the most prosperous country in Europe.

On the 13th September 1500 Pedro Alvarez Cabral appeared with his fleet off Calicut. He had sailed from Lisbon on the 9th of March, soon after da Gama's return, and on his way to India had

<sup>1</sup> *Political India* (ed. by Sir John Cumming), 1932, Ch. V., Muhammadan Movements.

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incidentally discovered Brazil and Zanzibar. Cabral soon became embroiled with the zamorin in his efforts to found a settlement, but before the Portuguese commander sailed back to Lisbon he found a better harbour than Calicut in Cochin, where the Hindu raja, an enemy of the zamorin, was to prove a valuable ally.

By 1507 the Portuguese had fortified Cochin and established themselves on the island of Socotra. The Indian trade with the west was now tapped at its source, and the wealth of merchandise began to go to Europe in Portuguese ships by way of the Cape.

Direct intercourse between India and the western world had ended in the seventh century with the Arab conquest of Egypt and Persia, which had obliged all exports from India to pass through the hands of the Muhammadan rulers of the Levant, who literally held the East in fee. But this diversion of trade from the ancient route, from Moslem factories in Calicut through the Red Sea merchants of Jidda and so by Suez, Cairo and Alexandria to Europe, while it ruined the merchants of Venice and Genoa, was a heavy blow to the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt, who lost the large revenue drawn from the customs dues levied in transit. By his ingenious manipulation of the pepper trade the Sultan secured one-third of the profits on every voyage and, in addition to this, import and export duties aggregating 20 per cent. *ad valorem* were imposed in Egypt. Added to this the Portuguese ceaselessly harried the Moslem trading vessels plying between the ports of Gujarat and Jidda, and showed a hostility towards the Muhammadan people which might possibly have been justified by previous European history had it not been accompanied by horrible and most unchristian atrocities. Pilgrim ships were mercilessly sunk, and even though women and children might be among the passengers they were left to drown.

Within ten years of their arrival the Portuguese had consequently aroused the violent hostility of every Muhammadan State on the Arabian littoral. Moslem supremacy of the eastern seas was at stake and a coalition was formed by the Sultan of Egypt and Mahmud I of Gujarat, with whom the Hindu zamorin of Calicut joined forces to meet the challenge.

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The allied fleet, commanded by Amir Husain, the Kurdish governor of Jedda, attacked a Portuguese squadron in the harbour of Chaul in January 1508 and overwhelmed it. But a year later the Portuguese Viceroy Francesco de Almeida sailed up the coast to Diu with his whole fleet and won a decisive naval victory in February 1509. The Moslem fleet was practically annihilated and the command of the Arabian Sea passed into the hands of the Portuguese. It was upon sea-power that the Portuguese wealth and ascendancy was founded. They never attempted to establish an empire in India, and they consolidated their naval position by building a chain of fortified posts along the coast line from the Cape of Good Hope to China. No ship could sail those seas without a Portuguese passport, and the whole of the trade with the Indies and with China was assured for nearly a century.

In November 1510 the Portuguese established themselves at Goa, the first territory in India to be directly governed by Europeans since the days of Alexander's generals; and there they have remained to this day. Alfonso de Albuquerque had become Viceroy in 1509, and he appointed Portuguese district officers with a Hindu clerical staff, while he maintained the Indian system of village local government. Muhammadans were excluded from the government service. Hindu regiments with their own officers were raised, and the earliest European-trained Indian troops first saw service against the Muhammadans at Dabhol and the Hindus at Calicut. Another of de Albuquerque's measures was to abolish *sati*, the sacrifice of the Hindu widow on the funeral pyre, which was so often only voluntary in theory. *Sati* was prohibited from time to time by rulers of various Hindu States. It was made illegal in the East India Company's territory in 1829.

But in one respect the Viceroy embarked on a policy which largely contributed to the decline of Portuguese power in India. He foresaw the drain which the demands of the eastern possessions must entail on the man-power of so small a kingdom as Portugal, and he sought to counteract it by the encouragement of mixed marriages. It may here be remarked that the English East India Company, seventy years after the foundation of their first factory at

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Surat, pursued a similar policy.<sup>1</sup> In the early days of the English East India Company children of mixed marriages were frequently educated in England and returned to hold good positions in India. In the British case this policy had no disastrous results, but it has led up to the present economic Anglo-Indian problem.

In 1514 de Albuquerque was recalled, but died at Goa before he could sail. The great Portuguese Viceroy, brave, resolute and clear-sighted, with his cruelty towards Muhammadans as the one stain on his character, had perceived that the three keys to the eastern trade were Malacca, Ormuz and Aden. The first two of these he won, but with his 20 ships, 1700 Portuguese and 800 Indian troops he failed to take the last. In his farewell letter to King Manoel he said: "I leave the chief place in India in your Majesty's power, the only thing left to be done being the closing of the gates of the Straits."

The majority of the governors and viceroys who followed did little to reflect credit on themselves or upon their country. His successor, Lopo Soares, threw away a golden opportunity to occupy Aden unopposed, and according to the Portuguese historian Faria y Sousa, who was there at the time, began the downfall of Portuguese power in India by allowing his European officers to trade, a concession which ultimately led to the incomes of station commanders being estimated on the basis of their illicit gains.

With the exception of *sati*, de Albuquerque had not interfered with the customs of the people of Goa, but in 1540 the King of Portugal ordered all the Hindu temples in the island to be destroyed; and the local application of a religious intolerance then regrettably universal in the Christian world is generally held by historians<sup>2</sup> to be one of the reasons for the decline of Portuguese power in India. The forcible union of Portugal with Spain after the battle of Alcantara in 1580 undoubtedly hastened this decline, even though the eastern trade was specifically retained by Portuguese merchants

<sup>1</sup> As in Surat General Letter from the Governor and Directors in London dated 14th July 1686 (India Office MS. Records).

<sup>2</sup> See *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. IV. Ch. I., by Sir E. Denison Ross, pp. 17, 18. The work of the Catholic missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in India is referred to in very different terms in the following chapter by Professor Geyl.

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and Portuguese ships. But the dominating factor which brought the Portuguese control of the Indian trade to an end was the loss of their supremacy in the eastern seas, an event which was precipitated by the Armada disaster in which the fleet of Portugal was involved. That supremacy had been established by force, the only right then recognized in practice throughout India, and it had been acknowledged in virtue of the Papal mandate by Latin Christendom, a view which was not shared by the Dutch and the English, who appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Affonsa da Sousa, in himself a worthless governor, is, however, to be credited with bringing out to Goa in 1542 the Jesuit, Francis Xavier, one of the first members of the Society. After ten years of devoted and self-sacrificing missionary work in India and the Far East, this great saint died off the coast of China in 1552 and was buried in Goa under a magnificent shrine. The relics of St. Francis Xavier are exposed still for veneration at stated periods, and are visited by crowds of Hindus as well as Christians.

The viceroyalty of da Sousa is also marked by the arrival in India in 1553 of the most famous figure in Portuguese literature, Luis Vaz de Camoens, author of *The Lusiads*. Camoens, who was of the same stock as Vasco da Gama, had been banished to India as a soldier in the ranks for wounding an officer of the court, and is said to have played a conspicuous part in the conquest of the Alagada islands.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the Indian viceroyalty extended over Mozambique, Ormuz, Muscat, Ceylon and Malacca, each under a governor. The headquarters of the Viceroy were at Goa and he exercised supreme control over the civil, naval and military administrations, assisted by the Council of State and the Council of the Three Estates.

After the death of King John III of Portugal in 1557, the Portuguese power in Europe and in the East began to weaken. But Portuguese prestige in India was restored for a time by Dom Luiz de Atayde, who was Viceroy from 1568 to 1571. By his splendid courage, his unswerving devotion to duty and his skill as a commander he crushed the formidable confederacy which the kings of Ahmadnagar

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and Bijapur and the zamorin of Calicut had made to overwhelm the Portuguese settlements by land. But the destruction of Vijayanagar in 1565 and the consequent extinction of a flourishing trade connection was a blow to the prosperity of Goa from which the Portuguese could not possibly recover. This carries the history of the Portuguese in India to 1573, when friendly negotiations were begun between the Viceroy and the Emperor Akbar.

The history of the kingdoms then existing in India has now been brought, with one notable exception, up to their contact with the descendants of Babar, known as the Timurid dynasty. That exception is the kingdom of Delhi.

After the death of Firoz the provincial governors threw off their allegiance to Delhi. The Hindu population ceased paying the *jizya* and began to rise against Muhammadan rule, and rebellion became so serious by 1394 in Koil, Etawah and Kanauj that the eunuch Malik Sarvar restored order, occupied Jaunpur and then declared his independence as King of the East.

Within ten years five kings, the grandsons and the youngest son of Firoz, followed one another on the throne of Delhi like transient and embarrassed phantoms.

The state of the country was an open invitation to an invader. In the days of Firoz a united kingdom and a formidable army had warded off the threatened Mongol inroad of 1379. But when Pir Muhammad, grandson of the Amir Timur Lang, led the advance guard of the coming invasion across the Indus at the end of 1397, all possible hope of external defence had vanished with all expectation of internal security. The fief-holders of the north-west, dissipating their forces by fighting amongst themselves, offered little resistance, and in May 1398 Pir Muhammad occupied Multan.

The kingdom of Delhi was equally powerless under its puppet King Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, grandson of Firoz, and his mayor of the palace Mallu. Four years earlier Mahmud's dominion had been bounded by the walls of his capital while his cousin the usurper

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Nusrat Shah (by this time a refugee in the Doab) ruled at Firozabad over the surrounding country at the bidding of his ministers.

Timur, whose conquests were almost as unbounded as his appalling ferocity, left Samarkand in April 1398 with a force of about 90,000 cavalry, passed through Kabul in the middle of August and crossed the Indus towards the end of September. The pretext for the invasion of India had been the toleration of its Moslem rulers towards Hinduism, for Timur was a Barlas Turk and an ardent upholder of Islam. The stimulus had been the negation of government amounting to the disarmament of the kingdom following upon the death of Firoz. But the real object of the expedition was plunder.

Desolation and ruin and the piled-up corpses of unnumbered thousands of Hindus marked the advance of the conqueror, and on 7th December Timur's army encamped close to the famous Ridge overlooking Delhi. Three days later Mallu made an ineffective sortie from the city and Timur responded by massacring 100,000 adult male Hindu prisoners of war.

On the 17th of December Timur crossed the Jumna and, under the walls of Delhi, met the forces which Mahmud and Mallu had with difficulty collected. The King of Delhi's army, consisting of 10,000 cavalry, 120 armour-plated elephants carrying grenadiers and archers, and 40,000 infantry, was heavily outnumbered. Timur's dispositions to deal with the elephants were a screened trench, a line of hobbled buffaloes and the use of calthrops, and these proved entirely effective. The issue was never in doubt. The Indian attack upon the invaders' right wing was outflanked and repulsed, while Timur's advance on the opposite flank was completely successful and Mahmud's army was routed.

The defeated king found a humiliating refuge in Gujarat with Zafar Khan, the son of a Rajput convert to Islam who had renounced his allegiance to Mahmud two years earlier. The conqueror entered Delhi and after an illusory amnesty won by the entreaties of the *mullahs* the capital was given up to wholesale sack and a general massacre which lasted five days. Only the quarter occupied by the chief representatives of the Moslem religion was spared, and the spoils of precious stones, gold and silver were enormous.



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Meerut was stormed early in January 1399, and by the end of February the fury of destruction and orgy of slaughter had swept over Hardwar, Kangra and Jammu. Timur recrossed the Indus on the 19th of March, and retired up the Tochi Valley from the country which he had plunged into the most fearful depths of misery, desolation, famine and pestilence. He has been described by a master hand as "an old white-haired cripple from the Far East, an intellectual specialist in chess, theology and conquests, and perhaps the greatest artist in destruction known in the savage annals of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

The rightful King Mahmud was still a fugitive and Nusrat Shah, emerging from his hiding-place in the Doab, set himself up in Delhi, that city of the dead where for two whole months "not a bird moved wing." But Nusrat's reign was shortlived. Mallu raised an army among the Hindus of the Doab and by the spring of 1401 had expelled the usurper from Delhi and forced the turbulent Hindus of Etawah to submit and pay tribute. He then persuaded Mahmud Shah who was living in Malwa to return and take up his position as nominal head of what remained of the kingdom of Delhi.

For the next four years Mallu, the real ruler of the kingdom, made attempts to recover complete authority over Kanauj, Gwalior and Etawah, but without conspicuous success. In November 1405 he was killed in action against Khizr Khan, known as the Sayyid,<sup>2</sup> whom Timur had made his viceroy over the Punjab and Upper Sind. Mahmud lived until February 1413, while the government was carried on by a group of nobles headed by Daulat Khan Lodi. The last of the Tughlaks had reigned in name for twenty years while the kingdom had shrunk to the confines of Rohtak, Sambhal and the Doab, and Northern India had suffered one of the most terrible invasions known in history. Daulat Khan ruled on until the end of May 1414, when Khizr Khan ended a victorious campaign in the Doab by seizing

<sup>1</sup> H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Sayyids are descendants of the Prophet; and it is extremely doubtful if Khizr Khan had a claim to the title by which he and his descendants are generally known. Al-Badaoni's "proofs" are exceedingly flimsy and Firsihta thought very little of "his pretensions."

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the capital and setting up Sayyid rule in Delhi nominally at the outset as Timur's viceroy.

Khizr Khan and his three descendants kept their hold on the kingdom for thirty-seven years. The founder of the Sayyid line was a man of energy and decision, and his son Mubarak Shah who succeeded him in 1421 could rouse himself to vigorous action in a crisis. But the last kings of the dynasty were feeble and vacillating. Khizr Khan Murbarak had been obliged to make frequent expeditions to recover arrears of tribute from the Hindu States of Katehr and Gwalior and from Mewat,<sup>1</sup> which was under Moslem government. But the reign of Murbarak's worthless nephew, Muhammad Shah, saw Gwalior and the Doab renounce the authority of Delhi; the army of Jaunpur annex parts of the kingdom, and the Mewati tribesmen raid almost to the city walls; while coming events were foreshadowed by the growing power throughout the Punjab of the Governor of Sirhind, Malik Buhlul Lodi, who ceased to remit the revenue due to the royal treasury.

In 1451, seven years after his succession, the contemptible and self-indulgent Alam Shah abdicated in favour of Buhlul; and the Sayyid line ended with a pleasure-seeking pensioner living in retirement at Budaun.

The Lodi family were Khaljis of Turkish origin who had long been settled in Afghanistan, and Buhlul, when he came with his bluff Afghan kinsmen to the effete court of Delhi, founded the line of Pathan (or Afghan) kings. Under the feeble government of the last of the Sayyids the kingdom had dwindled to no more than the city and its surrounding villages, and the Afghan soldier, shrewd, resolute and energetic, was the very man to re-establish the almost forgotten authority of Delhi.

The most pressing danger was the aggressive state of Jaunpur, and the new king at once took measures to retrieve the critical situation which faced him at his accession. He detached the fief-holders of the Doab and the State of Etawah from their allegiance to Hussain, King of Jaurpur; and then engaged in an intermittent

<sup>1</sup> An ill-defined tract south of Delhi.

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war with his rival which went on for a quarter of a century with varied fortune until 1479, when Hussain was decisively defeated and Jaunpur was taken.

Jaunpur had been ruled for eighty-five years by its Sharqi kings, a line which was probably of negro blood.<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1394 by Kvaja Jahan, minister of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud of Delhi, the succession was continued by his adopted family. The outstanding features of Sharqi rule were an aggressive foreign policy which although at first successful ultimately led to the downfall of the State, and the magnificent buildings with which they enriched their kingdom. Ibrahim, the third of the line and a great patron of art and learning, by completing the Atala Devi mosque at Jaunpur in 1408 raised a fabric whose immense facade rivals the great propylons of an Egyptian temple. His two successors continued to build splendid mosques which stand to this day, but the beautiful palaces which had been built at Jaunpur were destroyed by Barbak, Buhlul's son, when he was made king of the conquered state in 1486.

After the conquest of Jaunpur Buhlul exacted the submission of the Raja of Dholpur, the Moslem Governor of Bari, and the Raja of Gwalior, and then suddenly falling ill died in July 1489. He was succeeded by his son Sikandar Shah, Barbak's younger brother.

Sikandar was a resolute and able ruler. When he came to the throne he reorganized the administration of the provinces and, while instantly repressing rebellion whenever it arose, dealt leniently with the defeated rebels, who included his elder brother Barbak. But Jaunpur continued to be a thorn in his side. The Hindu landholders revolted and raised an army of 100,000 men, Barbak once more proved seditious and intrigued both with the rebels and with the deposed Sharqi King Hussain; and Sikandar was obliged to expel his brother from Jaunpur and annex the State to the kingdom of Delhi.

The king never let slip an opportunity to add to his dominions either by skilful diplomacy or by force of arms, and his kingdom grew until it extended over the Punjab, the Doab, Jaunpur, Oudh,

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. III. p. 259.

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Bihar, Tirhut and the country between the Sutlej and Bundelkhand. But Sikandar's power was more apparent than real. His hold over the feudatory States, provinces and fiefs was in practice ineffective, and the almost independent local rulers were far from being knit up in one consolidated kingdom.

Buhlul and Sikandar both by inclination and force of circumstances appointed their kinsmen and fellow-countrymen to the chief offices, and the most important posts were in the hands of Afghans, a race that has always been proud, unruly and impatient of authority.

Like his father before him Sikandar never dared to risk his precarious hold on the Punjab by drawing on its resources; had that been possible Hindustan would have been reduced far more quickly than it was. The Lodi kings contented themselves with such revenue as the province chose to remit to Delhi.

Sikandar died in November 1517. He was the greatest of the Lodi kings, and the one great blot on the character of a strong and otherwise kindly ruler was the fierce bigotry which led to the wholesale destruction of Hindu temples during his reign. Nor was the period one in which Moslem architecture flourished. Neither the Sayyid nor the Lodi kings had the resources of a great kingdom to enable them to build striking monuments to rival the palace citadel of Firozabad. But while as an innovator Firoz had been the first to incorporate machicolation in Indian fortifications, Sayyid architecture, by the introduction of blue-enamelled tiling and coloured plaster-work, was greatly to influence future decorative art.

After Sikandar's death the Lodi nobles elected his eldest son Ibrahim as king. The succession was disputed but the new king acted with energy, crushed the opposition and in 1518 carried out his father's design and took Gwalior. But his successes in the field were more than outweighed by his insensate acts of capricious tyranny, and this victory was followed by a revolt of the Afghan nobles under Jalal Khan Lodi. The insurrection was suppressed but the general discontent grew stronger and stronger, and Bahadur Khan headed a rising and proclaimed himself King in Bihar.

This was serious enough but events of still greater moment were shaping themselves in the north-west. Daulat Khan Lodi,

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the powerful Governor of Lahore, warned by Ibrahim's tyrannical policy, became convinced that a royal victory over the rebels in Hindustan and Bihar would be followed by a campaign against himself. To meet this danger he not only strengthened his position in the Punjab to the point of virtual independence but he invited Babar, King of Kabul, to come to his help, and so took the first step towards the foundation of the Mogul Empire.

NOTE.—At this point between the incursions of what have been referred to as the Mongols and the establishment of the Mogul Empire an explanation of these two names is necessary. The *Oxford History of India* (1928 impression), footnote to p. 225, gives the following definition: "It is convenient to confine the term Mongol to the heathen followers of Chingiz, who were mostly 'narrow-eyed' people, reserving the term Mogul in its various spellings for the more civilized tribes, largely of Turki blood, who became Muhammadans in the fourteenth century and from whom sprang the Chagatai . . . section of Turks to which Babar and his successors in India belonged. The Turki races ordinarily resemble Europeans in features and have not the Mongolian 'narrow eyes' strongly marked, but Turks and Mongols intermarried freely and the Mongol blood often asserted itself. It shows in the portraits of Akbar."

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1336. Vijayanagar city built by Vira Ballala III Hoysala.
- 1342. Death of Vira Ballala III.
- 1347. Bahman Shah established Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan.
- 1356. Bengal recognized as independent by Delhi sultanate.
- 1358. Bukha I, ruler of Vijayanagar kingdom.
- 1358-1377. Muhammad I, King of Deccan.
- 1360. Wars between Deccan and Vijayanagar began.
- 1387-1395. Deccan famine.
- 1394. Disintegration of Delhi kingdom of Firoz Shah Tughlak.
- 1398-1399. Timur (Tamurlane) invaded Northern India.
- 1414. Commencement of Sayyid dynasty of Delhi.
- 1451. Lodi dynasty of Delhi founded by Bahlul.
- 1463-1481. Mahmud Gawan, chief minister of Deccan.
- 1481-1518. Break-up of Bahmani kingdom into the five kingdoms of the Deccan.
- 1489-1517. Sikandar Shah Lodi, extended Delhi sovereignty over Northern India.
- 1498. Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut.
- 1510. Portuguese established at Goa.
- 1517-1526. Ibrahim Lodi, King of Delhi.
- [1565. The Moslem States of the Deccan crushed Vijayanagar at Talikota.]

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(Marco Polo sailed to India from Java about the year 1292 and coasted round the peninsula, touching at the principal ports between Mumpali and Somnath.)

NOTE.—Muhammad Qasim Firishta was born at Astrabad on the Caspian about the year 1570. He came as a boy to Ahmadnagar and went on to the court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur in 1589. There he wrote the great work from which the more modern histories of the period have been compiled, on the growth of Muhammadan power in India up to the year 1612. The history may be said to have been begun in the field when the author, serving with the Bijapur army, was wounded in the 1589 campaign against a usurper of the Ahmadnagar throne. It was first published in its present form under even more difficult conditions, for the original English translation of Firishta, made from the Persian by Lieut.-Colonel John Briggs of the Madras Army, was destroyed when the Peshwa Baji Rao burnt the British Residency in Poona in November 1817. This misfortune adds interest to a footnote in the translation Colonel Briggs eventually published. In comparing the great diamond which fell to Babar after Panipat with other well-known stones, he mentions at the end of the list "the Nassuck diamond which was discovered among the Peshwa's treasures, dug up by the translator of this work, only weighs 89 carats."

## CHAPTER VI

### Mogul India

INDIA at the time of the Mogul invasion was a country divided against itself. The Khalji empire which the tyrannical folly of Muhammad Tughlak had broken into a number of lesser kingdoms had split up into even smaller States. In the north the Afghan sultanate of Delhi barely cast its shadow beyond the city walls. In Rajputana there was about as much unity as in the Highlands of Scotland at the same period. Far to the south the Hindu king of Vijayanagar was paramount beyond the Kistna River, and a menace to his disunited neighbours of the Deccan.

But while the political state of the country was an open invitation to so daring, a soldier of fortune as Babar there were stirring beneath the surface forces which were to prove in the end too strong for the empire of the Great Moguls. The fires of adversity had brought into greater prominence than ever before the doctrine of the essential unity of God; a doctrine which involves the belief<sup>1</sup> that "every god accepted by Hinduism is elevated and ultimately identified with the central Reality which is one with the deeper self of man. The addition of new gods to the Hindu pantheon does not endanger it." From this doctrine the religious revival known as the *Bhakti* movement was born a century before the coming of Babar. Without such a movement it is highly improbable that either the Marathas or the Sikhs would have formed themselves into the powerful combinations which they afterwards became.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the ages the leaders of Hindu religious thought

<sup>1</sup> Professor S. Radhakrishnan of Calcutta University (Upton Lectures, Oxford, 1926) in *The Hindu View of Life* (London, 1927), p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, Edwardes and Garrett, p. 2.

and practice have always experimented with new forms as conditions altered. Hinduism has been described as a movement not a position, a process not a result; although its essential ideas have remained unchanged since the time of the Vedas.<sup>1</sup> Contact with the civilized Dravidians of the south transformed Vedism into a theistic religion. The stimulus given by Islam resulted in the new conceptions of the Deity as preached in the fifteenth century to all who would listen through Northern India by Ramananda and his strangely assorted disciples, who included a Rajput, a currier, a barber and the Moslem weaver poet Kabir.<sup>2</sup> Western ideas, which became familiar to the higher castes with the close British connection beginning in the nineteenth century, resulted in a fresh impulse; and this has found expression partly in religious reform and a broader social outlook but more conspicuously in political aspirations.

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad, surnamed Babar (The Tiger), was born in Ferghana, his father's khanate in the Valley of the Jaxartes now called Khokand, on 14th February 1483. He represented both the Turki and the Mongol races of Tartars and numbered two great conquerors among his ancestors. On his father's side he was in the direct line of Timur, while through his mother he descended from Chingiz Khan.

Almost from the day when Babar succeeded his father in his twelfth year his life was crowded with adventure. He was driven out of Ferghana, tried several times in vain to regain the lost ancestral kingdom of Samarkand and finally, in 1504, when he was twenty-one, he took Kabul and established himself there as king. Fifteen years later he made his first appearance in India and penetrated as far as the River Jhelum. In virtue of the conquest of Hindustan by Timur, Babar looked upon the people of the country as his subjects, exacted tribute, and forbade any ill-treatment and plundering of the

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed exposition of this, the Hindu, standpoint see *The Hindu View of Life*

<sup>2</sup> His works have been translated by Rabindranath Tagore: *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Macmillan, 1921.



inhabitants by his soldiers, in striking contrast to the behaviour of his ancestor.

He noted in his diary for 1519<sup>1</sup> that "the people of Hindustan and particularly the Afghans are a strangely foolish and senseless race, possessed of little reflection and less foresight. They can neither persist in and manfully support a war, nor can they continue in a state of amity and friendship." In a later criticism of the country and its people Babar comments on the absence of ice and baths, and considered the "gang of dirty fellows" with small oil lamps a poor substitute for candles and candlesticks.

Three more incursions into India followed the first, and negotiations were opened with Daulat Khan, Governor of Lahore, who proved as treacherous to Babar as he was to his rightful suzerain, Ibrahim Lodi the King of Delhi. Then on 17th November 1525, "The sun being in the sign of the Archer," Babar led his army of 10,000 cavalry<sup>2</sup> down the Jellalabad road towards Hindustan. When he reached Sialkot he learnt that Daulat Khan, at the head of an army of malcontents, had been defeated by Ibrahim Lodi; and with a well-founded distrust of his so-called ally, Babar secured the Lahore Governor's submission before coming to grips with the King of Delhi. Then Babar "placed his foot in the stirrup of resolution and his hand on the reins of confidence-in-God and marched against Sultan Ibrahim."

On 12th April 1526 Babar's ten thousand faced the hundred thousand men and the hundred elephants of the *Panipat*. Afghan army on the plain of Panipat.<sup>3</sup> The enormous disparity in numbers was to an appreciable extent balanced by the Mogul strength in artillery, but Babar's greatest asset may be described in his own words<sup>4</sup>: "Ibrahim was a young man of no experience. He was negligent in all his movements; he marched without order; retired or halted without plan and engaged in battle

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Babur*, written by himself in Turki, 2 vols, tr. Leyden and Erskine.

<sup>2</sup> *Firishta*, Vol. II p. 41. Babar gives 12,000 as the total, including merchants and followers (*Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 194).

<sup>3</sup> *Firishta*, Vol. II. p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of Babur*, Vol. II. pp. 181-188, describing the battle.

without foresight; . . . and was too miserly to raise additional forces, or even to pay his troops in the field."

The Mogul commander employed the time allowed him before the battle in preparing an entrenched position, strengthened with fascine breastworks and wagons. Then at dawn on the morning of the 21st of April, Babur's patrols reported that the enemy was advancing to the attack. Babur in his campaigns adopted the tactics of the Ottoman Turks, then the most formidable military power in the world. Ibrahim's army came on in mass, but under showers of arrows, the steady musketry of the matchlockmen and a well-directed artillery fire, the Afghan army failed to break the Mogul line. They began to waver, and Babur called upon his cavalry reserves to get round the enemy's flanks and charge them in rear, while he ordered his whole line to advance. "The sun had mounted spear-high when the onset of battle began, and the combat lasted till midday, when the enemy was completely broken and routed. By the grace and mercy of Almighty God this mighty army in the space of half a day was laid in the dust." Sixteen thousand of the Afghan army were killed in action according to Firishta, and five thousand men lay dead round Ibrahim Lodi. By launching his cavalry in instant pursuit, Babur gave the beaten army no opportunity to rally.

Babur followed up his victory by the immediate despatch of a flying column to occupy Agra, while he settled the civil and military administration of Delhi and took over the treasury. Before he entered Agra, which was to be the new capital, in triumph early in May he spent a few quiet days visiting the tombs, palaces and gardens in and around Delhi.

With the great cities of Delhi and Agra in the victor's hands the Afghan dynasty was at an end, but Mogul rule in Northern India was still far from secure, and Babur was confronted with a danger from within which threatened the utter ruin of his whole enterprise. The fierce heat of an Indian May was taking heavy toll among the ranks of an army drawn from the uplands of the north, and while the generals made outspoken protests to their leader,

the men began openly to prepare to go back to Kabul. It was the first chapter of Alexander's retreat over again, but the story had a different ending. Babur viewed the crisis as flat mutiny, but the address he made to his officers restored the lost morale of his army, while those who still wished to return home were allowed to go and were treated by the king with great generosity.

It was now possible to deal with the external problems. The great Afghan fief-holders were naturally hostile to the prospect of Mogul rule, but Babur gradually induced the majority to make their submission by a characteristic display of clemency and tact.

An even greater danger threatened from the Hindu confederacy, headed by the gallant veteran Rana Sangrama Singh of Mewar, one of the greatest of the princes of Chitor, the conqueror of Mahmud II of Malwa, and a far more formidable opponent than Ibrahim Lodi. Sangrama, in his bid to restore Hindu rule in Northern India and win an empire for himself, took the field with seven great rajas, a hundred and thirteen lesser chiefs, 80,000 horse and 500 war elephants.<sup>1</sup> Early in February 1527 Babur marched to meet him with his heavily outnumbered force. The odds against them greatly disheartened the Mogul troops, but Babur rose to the emergency with courage and resource. After pledging himself to renounce the wine "to which he had been formerly much addicted," he made so stirring an appeal to his army that they all took oath after him on the Koran "that none will even think of turning his face from this warfare nor desert from the battle, till his soul is separated from his body "

The armies met at Khanua, near Sikri, on 16th March 1527,<sup>2</sup> and once more the fate of Northern India hung in the balance. The battle was won by the devastating effect of the Mogul guns, and the Rajput confederacy was completely routed. Sangrama got back to his own country, bent on raising another army, to be poisoned by his own ministers. The military power of the Rajputs was broken and Babur, advancing into the country, took the stronghold

<sup>1</sup> *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Lieut.-Colonel James Tod (Oxford), ed. 920, I. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Babur*, Vol. II. p. 204.

of Chandari in spite of its obstinate defence. The next two years were spent in securing the eastern border by operations against the Afghan rulers of Bihar and Bengal.

Babar had established an empire stretching from the Oxus to the Bengal frontier and from the foot of the Himalaya to Gwalior. But he did not live to conquer Bengal, Gujarat or the Deccan.

Babar died on 24th December<sup>1</sup> 1530. He was not quite forty-seven, but his hard life and the Indian climate had sapped the constitution of the man of tireless energy who insisted on swimming every river he saw.

The story of his death, as told by his daughter Gul-badan Begam—Princess Rose-body—is well known.<sup>2</sup> His son Humayun was dangerously ill, and Babar decided to save him by the Eastern rite of "circumambulation," which is still used in Persia. The efficacy of the rite depends upon the offering of the most treasured possession, and Babar swept aside the suggestion that he should sacrifice the great diamond which Nadir Shah first called the Koh-i-noor, the "mountain of light." Walking round his son's sick-bed he prayed: "O God! If a life may be exchanged for a life, I who am Babar give my life and my being for Humayun." His prayer was answered. Humayun at once recovered, and three months later all that was mortal of Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babar was carried to Kabul to be buried in the garden he loved.

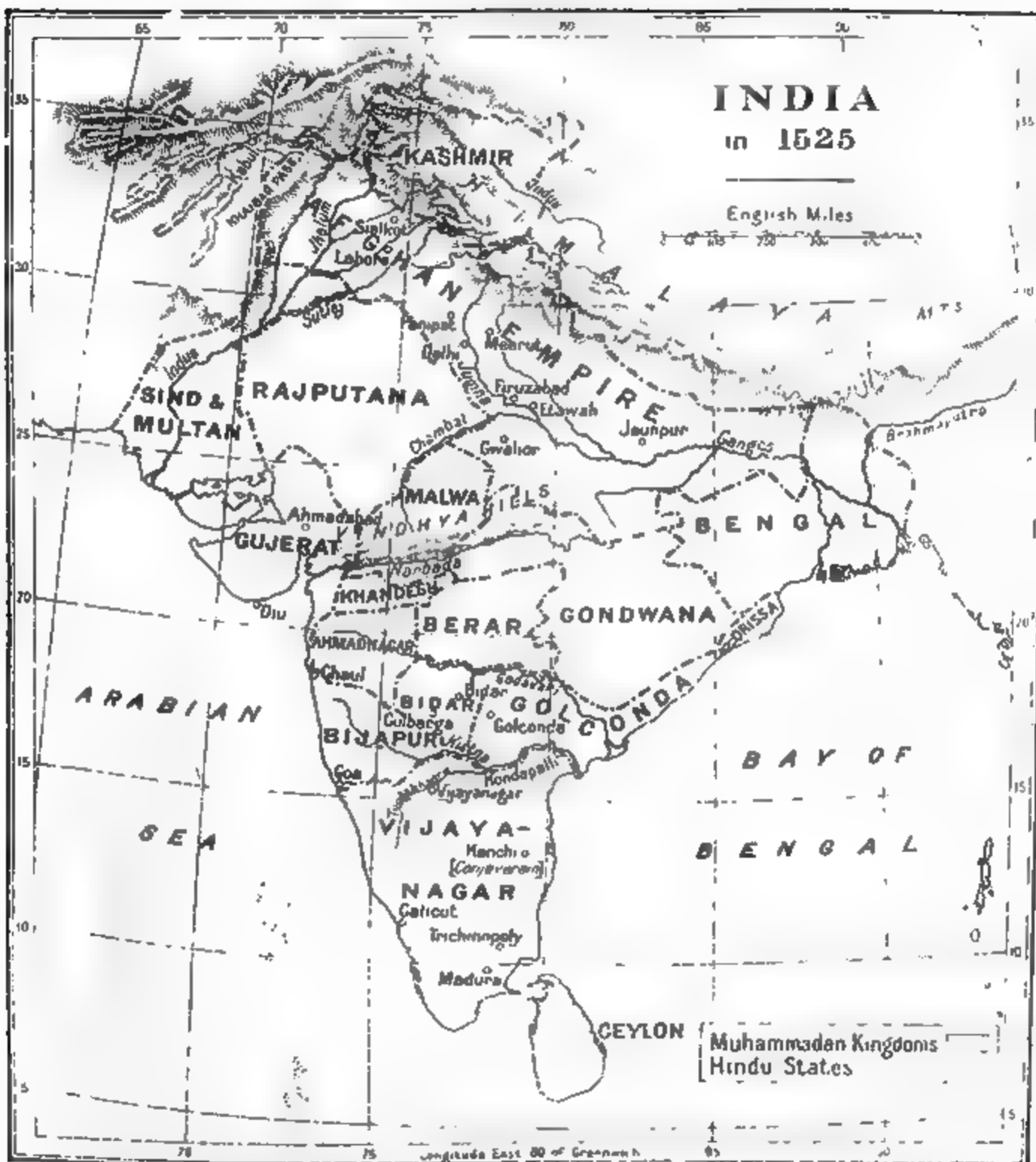
Babar from a homeless wanderer rose to be the ruler of an empire entirely by the force of his personality, his dauntless courage and the cheerfulness with which he shared the hardships of his men. He never commanded a great army in the field, but his campaigns invariably showed sound tactics and inspiring leadership.

In the wide range of his interests he was an unusual type of soldier. In Persian he was an accomplished poet, in his native

<sup>1</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. p. 64. *The History of Humayun* gives 26th December as the day of Babar's death, but the authoress was seven at the time and wrote her history in the reign of Akbar.

<sup>2</sup> *The History of Humayun*, tr. by Annette Beveridge.

1525

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-x^2} dx = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-x^2} dx$$


*History of India (1901 Nicholson & Watson Ltd.)*

Stanford: Free Press, 1984.



Turki he was master of an admirable style, and he was an excellent musician; as an athlete he could take a man under each arm and leap along the ramparts from one pointed pinnacle to another; he was a keen big-game hunter and he excelled as a swordsman and with the bow; his *Memoirs* show him equally happy securing a new plant for his garden, or composing a set of verses in the stress of a campaign, for he wrote his elegies himself. Before Khanua he renounced wine and he kept his pledge; but in earlier days, "when he was inclined to make merry, he used to fill a garden reservoir with wine, upon which was inscribed the well-known verse:

" Give me but wine and blooming maids,  
All other joys I freely spurn:  
Enjoy them, Babar, while you may—  
For youth once past will ne'er return."

But as he grew older the opium habit, which he had acquired under the stress of his early hardships, became stronger; and before his death its enervating effect was beginning to tell upon him.

Judged by the standard of the times in which he lived, Babar was not cruel, and his children were devoted to him. Unless a place refused to surrender and stood the assault, he neither put the garrison to the sword nor sacked the town and enslaved the inhabitants; and if he inflicted a terrible punishment on those convicted in the plot to poison him, it is well to remember the atrocities in the name of justice then prevalent in Europe. On the other hand he pardoned ingratitude and treason again and again, and he carried his liberality to such an excess in his everyday life that it bordered on prodigality. Babar was an ardent Moslem, he looked upon fighting the Hindus as a "holy war," and he never omitted his daily prayers.

Firishta describes Babar as "handsome in his person, his address engaging and unaffected, his countenance pleasing and his disposition affable." The miniature in the British Museum gives an irresistible impression of bubbling wit and great good humour. His own *Memoirs* are full of character-sketches of his acquaintances, such as the description "an extremely witty and jocose man, but fearless in debauchery," while Babar reveals himself in his own

pages as a Prince Hal who could turn in a moment from his boon companions to the affairs of the kingdom which he governed with wisdom, justice and mercy.

With the coming of Babar, India stood in the dawn of a new era. The Maurya government of Asoka had been guided by religious principles. The rule of the Sultans of Delhi had been definitely influenced by the religious leaders of Islam, who came first in the precedence of the court. In Europe the first half of the sixteenth century saw the break-up of the unity of Christendom in the Protestant Reformation and the great political reactions which followed. In India there arose the frankly secular rule of the Moguls. The new empire was of course Moslem, and on friendly terms with the Islamic rulers of Persia and Ottoman Turkey. But it was truly Indian as well, and during the reigns of Babar's earlier successors Muhammadans and Rajputs and other Hindu elements were drawn more closely together as a result of the sympathetic study of the learning, history and tradition of Hinduism.<sup>1</sup>

Babar left four sons. The eldest, Kamran, was Governor of Kabul and Kandahar, while the second son Humayun, in accordance with his father's wishes, became Emperor of the Mogul conquests in Upper India and the plains of the Ganges.

But Humayun's position was insecure. Bengal was unconquered; Bahadur Shah, the powerful Afghan King of Gujarat and Malwa, was actively hostile; and Humayun's brothers were openly disloyal; while the intrigues of the Portuguese, now masters of the western seaboard, created a disturbing influence.

The first of Humayun's difficulties came from Kamran, who forced the Emperor to transfer the Punjab to him, under a nominal suzerainty. This meant a serious loss, both in revenue and in men, to the imperial government, and at the same time Humayun was cut off from the Mogul recruiting grounds beyond the Indian frontier on which Babur had relied.

The reign, however, began auspiciously. Muhammad Lodi was expelled from Jaunpur, and with him the Lodi dynasty ceased to

<sup>1</sup> A. Yusuf Ali, *The Making of India* (London), 1925, Ch. IX.



exist as a ruling family. Bahadur Shah was thoroughly beaten at the battle of Mandsur in 1535. Mandu, the capital of Malwa, was occupied, the great fortress of Champaner was taken by escalade, in which Humayun greatly distinguished himself, and Gujarat was in the Emperor's hands.

These successes were, however, counterbalanced by the serious situation which had in the meantime arisen elsewhere. Humayun's younger brother Askari, at the head of part of the army, had raised a rebellion, Bahadur Shah was collecting fresh forces and, most dangerous of all, Sher Khan Sur,<sup>1</sup> the Afghan ruler of Bihar, was a formidable and threatening neighbour.

Humayun now betrayed the weakness and indecision of the opium addict,<sup>2</sup> which was to lead to disaster. After long hesitation he moved out from Gujarat and defeated the rebels near Lucknow. But he had still to reckon with Sher Khan. Hostilities broke out almost immediately and a series of indecisive operations followed. In 1538 Humayun invaded Bengal, recovered the province of Gaur which Sher Khan had occupied, and then relapsed into disastrous inactivity. His forces were dwindling from sickness and desertion and, as Firishta points out, the Emperor should have forced an action with Sher Khan at all hazards. But he allowed his enemy to reconquer the country and finally, with supplies running out and the rising floods of the rainy season endangering the line of communications, the Mogul army was obliged to retreat. At this juncture Humayun's younger brother Mirza Hindal raised a rebellion at Agra and proclaimed himself emperor, to be crushed immediately by Kamran, who, however, refused to send any reinforcements to the hard-pressed Humayun.

Assailed by flagrant disloyalty at home, by treachery and desertion in the field and with an active enemy pressing upon his retirement, Humayun opened negotiations with Sher Khan. According to Firishta, terms of peace, giving Sher Khan Bengal and Bihar on

<sup>1</sup> "Lion Lord" (of the) Sur (family); a title of honour conferred on Furid Sur, when an official in Bihar, for killing a tiger with one stroke of his sword in the presence of his master Muhammad Shah, and whose son he ousted from the throne (Firishta, Vol. II. pp. 98-109).

<sup>2</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. p. 83.

payment of a nominal tribute, had already been signed when the Afghan army in the early morning of a day in June 1539, attacked Humayun's forces at Chausa. Taken completely by surprise and with the Ganges behind them, the Mogul troops were cut to pieces. Humayun, with the utmost difficulty, escaped to Agra, where he tried in vain to enlist the active help of his brothers in the face of a common danger, and raised fresh forces which were more a rabble than an army.

Sher Khan proclaimed himself emperor, and formed an alliance with Gujarat and Malwa to enforce his title. Humayun, abandoned by Kamran, marched with 100,000 mounted levies to meet the pretender's army of 50,000 men. His troops deserted in thousands, he was out-generalled by Sher Khan, who once more made his opponent fight with the Ganges behind him, and on 17th May 1540, near Kanauj, Humayun was completely defeated. This time the result was decisive. For the next fifteen years Humayun was a wanderer and an exile, flying from Sind to Marwar, from Marwar to Persia, before he established himself in Afghanistan, while Sher Shah, as he was now known, reigned in his stead.

From 1540 until 1545 Sher Shah ruled the empire. After the decisive defeat of the imperial army and the pursuit of Humayun towards the Indus, Sher Shah secured the submission of the Punjab. Next he strengthened his hold on Bengal by reorganizing the fiefs and by the judicious appointment of Qazi Fazilat as Governor in the place of Khizr Khan, who had made an unsuccessful attempt to assert his independence.

Sher Shah then decided to subdue the Rajput chiefs, and invaded Malwa in 1542, the year in which his forces took Multan and reduced the surrounding districts. The Rajput war was a hard-fought struggle, in which Sher Shah met with only partial success, while he disgraced his arms by the treacherous massacre of the garrison of Raisin. In the end, however, Chitor surrendered and Sher Shah laid siege to Kalanjur, where he was fatally injured by the explosion of a field magazine, and died on 22nd May 1545.

Sher Shah was more than a successful soldier; he was a statesman who introduced a number of admirable reforms. *Sher Shah's Reforms.* Exclusive of Bengal, the realm was divided into forty-seven<sup>1</sup> administrative units of manageable size, and the principles of land survey and revenue then laid down were elaborated during the reign of Akbar. Sher Shah also fixed the standard of the rupee at 178 grains, a standard which was maintained by the Mogul emperors who followed him and which approximates to the present British India rupee of 180 grains.<sup>2</sup> A further reform was in the judicial system, and Firishta records<sup>3</sup>: "Such was the public security during his reign that travellers and merchants, depositing their property on the roadside, lay down to sleep without apprehension of robbery."

Considering the shortness of his reign, Sher Shah's record in the construction of public works is remarkable. From Bengal to the Indus, along two thousand miles of road, rest-houses were built every mile and a half, a succession of wells were dug and lines of fruit trees planted by the roadside. Horse posts were established to quicken the government postal service and for the use of merchants and others. Similar arrangements were made from Agra, the capital, to Manda. Sher Shah also built a number of mosques.

According to Abu-l-Fazl, the far from impartial author of the *Akbar-nama*, Sher Shah "surpassed even his father in wickedness" and was "a tyrannical mischief-maker." Hasan Khan was certainly anything but a good husband or parent, and Farid (as he then was known) left his home to enlist as a private soldier in the service of the Governor of Jaunpur. Here he educated himself, especially in history and poetry, and learnt the entire works of the poet Sa'di by heart. But he ruled the family fief, when it was entrusted to him, by doing justice to the poor, by seeing that the strong did not infringe the laws with impunity, and greatly increased the prosperity of the people.

On his record Sher Shah was a wise and just ruler, lenient to

<sup>1</sup> *Akbar-nama*, Vol. I. p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> *The Making of India*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II. p. 125.

his enemies, and one of the few occasions on which he showed the savage cruelty of his race was at Raisin. Firishta tells a story which may be taken to illustrate his ideals. "On being told that his beard grew white," Sher Shah replied: "It was true that he obtained the throne in the evening of life; a circumstance he always regretted, as it left him so short a time to be of use to his country and to promote the welfare of his people."

Sher Shah was followed by his second son Islam (Salim) Shah, a weak and unworthy successor. He died in 1553 and was succeeded by his young son Firoz, who was assassinated after a reign of three days. His murderer, Mubariz Khan, who was his cousin, and uncle by marriage, then seized the throne assuming the title of Muhammad Adil Shah. The new king was completely illiterate, wantonly extravagant and an offence to the Afghan nobility; and the country under the misgovernment of his Hindu minister Hemu rapidly lapsed into anarchy. Muhammad Shah with his highly unpopular minister soon fled to Chunar. Sikandar Sur, a grandson of Sher Shah, rising to power in the midst of civil war, persuaded the Afghan nobles to elect him as king. But his reign was brief. The chiefs quarrelled violently over the distribution of honours, the state of the country became even more chaotic, and Humayun seized the opportunity to regain his lost empire.

Humayun's wanderings had begun with an attempt to take Bakar and the terrible hardships in the Sind desert which followed his repulse. Most of his men deserted him but he was rejoined by the Turkoman Bairam Khan, who lived to play a prominent part in Humayun's restoration and was tutor to his great successor. For a time Humayun took refuge with the Raja of Umarkot and here, in the cold weather of 1542,<sup>1</sup> his Queen Hamidabanu gave birth to Akbar. Afghanistan

<sup>1</sup> Firishta gives 14th October the date recorded by Gul-badan Begam in the *Humayun-nama*; Abu-l-Fazl, a contemporary, gives 15th October in his *Akbar-Nama*, V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 326 and footnote, gives 23rd November.

with the treacherous Kamran on the throne proved too dangerous, and the fugitive at last found sanctuary at the hospitable court of Tahmasp Shah of Persia.

This was the turning-point in Humayun's fortunes. In 1544 Tahmasp gave the exiled Emperor an army to invade Afghanistan and Humayun captured Kandahar and Kabul, where he found Hamida and his little son whom his brother had taken from him. At the end of protracted fighting Kamran and Askari, the two brothers who had shown him persistent hostility, were sent to Mecca, Kamran, the main cause of his troubles, being blinded before he went, and Humayun ruled in Kabul.

In December 1554 Humayun with 15,000 cavalry and Bairam Khan as his principal general left Kabul to invade India. Lahore and the Sirhind district were occupied without opposition. Continuing the advance Bairam Khan surprised the Punjab army of 30,000 men under Tatar Khan in a night attack on the Sutlej and routed it. Sikandar Khan advanced to meet the invaders with 80,000 cavalry, great strength in artillery and a number of elephants. Humayun came down from Lahore, joined forces with Bairam Khan and on the 18th June 1555 completely defeated the Afghan army at Macchiwari. Sikandar escaped to the Punjab, where he could raise new forces; and Humayun entered Delhi as Emperor.

Akbar was made nominal Governor of the Punjab with Bairam Khan as his adviser and active operations were begun against Sikandar. But before these could be brought to a successful conclusion Humayun fatally injured himself by falling on the steps of the Sher Mandal palace, and died in January <sup>1</sup> 1556, at the age of fifty-one.

<sup>1</sup> The day of the month is uncertain. According to the *Tahakat-i-Akbar* of Nizam-ud-din Ahmad the date is 17th January, the *Akbar-nama* gives the 24th, and the *Badshah-nama* of Abdul Hamid 26th January. Concealing the king's death for purposes of policy, which appears to have been done, had a precedent in the case of Babar.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1519. Babar's first incursion into India.
- 1526. 21st April. Babar defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat; Delhi and Agra occupied: Mogul dynasty founded.
- 1527. 16th March. Babar defeated Sangrama Singh at Khanua. Moslem supremacy assured.
- 1528-1530. Babar's sovereignty extended from Oxus to Bengal frontier, and from the Himalaya to Gwalior.
- 1530. December. Death of Babar, accession of Humayun.
- 1535. Humayun's conquests of Jaunpur, Malwa and Gujarat.
- 1540. 17th May. Decisive defeat of Humayun near Kanauj by Sher Shah of Bihar.
- Humayun an exile.
- Sher Shah ruler of Northern India.
- 1545. Death of Sher Shah; succession of weak Sur kings.
- 1555. Humayun by his victory at Machhuwari (18th June) over Sikandar Sur regained his kingdom.
- 1556. January. Death of Humayun.

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## CHAPTER VII

### Akbar

THE news of Humayun's death reached Akbar at Kalanaur in the midst of the campaign against Sikandar, and Bairam Khan lost no time in having the new emperor proclaimed at Delhi and formally enthroned at Kalanaur on the 14th or 15th February<sup>1</sup> 1556. Akbar was then three months short of fourteen years of age.

His reign consists of three periods. The first, from his accession to the fall of the Regent Bairam Khan in 1560; the second, the short phase of harem government and unscrupulous ministers; and the final stage, from 1562 onwards, when he established himself as the first truly national ruler of India since the days of Asoka, and one of the greatest sovereigns in history.

The entire civil and military power was vested in Bairam Khan and his position was an unenviable one. On all sides the situation seemed pregnant with disaster. *Situation at Akbar's Accession.* Sikandar, still powerful in the Punjab, only awaited an opportunity to regain his throne; nor was he the only member of the Sur dynasty in the field. Muhammad Adil Shah ruled in Chunar, and his Hindu minister Hemu was at the head of a huge force that had been raised to oppose Humayun, and in a career of victory had already defeated his master's rival and cousin Ibrahim Sur. The Moguls were in the midst of a hostile population and in a country ravaged with famine. Akbar's natural refuge in the event of defeat was Afghanistan, which was, however, practically independent, and where the regent to the Emperor's younger brother Hakim Mirza was struggling with open rebellion.

<sup>1</sup> Abu-l-Fazl explains why the 15th and not 14th should be the date (*Akbar-nama*, Vol. II. p. 5, and see footnote). But most authorities, including V. A. Smith, give the 14th.

The Mogul army in the Punjab succeeded in defeating Sikandar Sur, who was driven into the hills, Nagarkot was subdued, and friendly relations were established with Dharmchand, the local raja.

Hemu now assumed the offensive, Agra was taken and Delhi was lost to Akbar by the cowardly incompetence of its Governor Tardi Beg Khan, who was subsequently executed by the regent's orders as a salutary example to others. Hemu, the Marwari merchant-minister, confident of victory and resolving to win the empire for himself as Maharaja Vikramaditya advanced with 100,000 men to crush the Moguls. Akbar's forces barely numbered 20,000 and his nobles urged a retreat to Kabul. But the young Emperor vigorously supported Bairam Khan in his determination not to abandon India without a struggle, and the little Mogul army marched down from Jullundur to give battle.

At the first contact Hemu lost all his artillery in an advance-guard action, and on the 5th November 1556 the main bodies of the two armies met on the field of *Panipat*. The weight of numbers told heavily, the Mogul right and left wings were thrown into confusion, and Hemu led his elephants in a charge upon the centre. But with victory apparently within his grasp an arrow struck the Hindu commander in the eye and made him temporarily unconscious. The Afghan army, believing their leader to be dead, broke and fled in all directions hotly pursued by the Mogul troops. Hemu was captured and, on Bairam's advice, killed by Akbar; fifteen hundred elephants and an immense treasure were taken; Delhi was entered in triumph the following day and Agra was soon afterwards occupied. The victory was decisive and it only remained to deal with the less formidable rivals to the throne.

The Mogul army returned to the Punjab and Sikandar was besieged in the fortress of Mankot, which surrendered in July 1557 after holding out for six months. Sikandar was allowed to retire to Bengal where he lived quietly upon his *jagirs* until his death two years later; Ibrahim Sur resigned himself to the inevitable situation and took refuge with the Raja of Jagannath; while Adil was killed fighting in Bengal.



Akbar had already conferred upon Bairam Khan the title of Khan Khanan (noble of nobles), which carried with it precedence immediately below princes of the blood, and the regent, now married to the Emperor's niece Salima Sultan Begam, was by far the most powerful man in the kingdom. The court was established at Agra and Bairam Khan applied himself to the tasks of administration and the education of his ward. He was more successful in the first of these duties. Between the years 1558 and 1560, the expansion of the empire went on with only one check, the failure to take the Rajput stronghold of Ranthambhor. The occupation of Gwalior established a strong point in Central India, Ajmer in the heart of Rajputana was taken, and the annexation of the province of Jaunpur secured the eastern frontier. The empire of Babar had been largely regained.

Meanwhile Akbar continued to be the despair of his tutors. He preferred athletics and the exercise of his remarkable gift of controlling the wild animals he loved to lessons, and he grew up to become a magnificent shot and first-class polo player while apparently unable even to identify the letters of the alphabet. But he was an omnivorous listener and his prodigious memory enabled him to master the immense number of books read aloud to him. At his death his library contained no less than 24,000 manuscript volumes.<sup>1</sup>

As a boy his only scholarly interests lay in poetry and art, an amazing side to a youth with a passion for outdoor sport and a strong natural bent for mechanics. One of his tutors (his father tried four in turn) introduced Akbar to the works of the Sufi poets, and he learnt by ear long passages of Hafiz and Jalal-ud-din Rumi. The strain of mysticism and the leaning towards free-thinking which these instilled are the key to a character over which authorities have completely differed, from the contemporary al-Badaoni and Abu-l-Fazl to Vincent Smith<sup>2</sup> and Laurence Binyon.

Akbar, his early life spent amidst the intrigues of an oriental court and its bitter disillusionments, was "eternally seeking for the signs

<sup>1</sup> *Akbar*, Binyon, pp 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> *Akbar the Great Mogul*, V. A. Smith, and the *Oxford History of India*.

and steps of a God," and he had from boyhood mystical experiences which seemed to be direct communion with the Divine Presence. A close student of Muhammadan history and theology he later acquired a wide knowledge of the philosophy and literature of Hinduism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. Foreigner though he was by descent and early upbringing, Akbar identified himself completely with the Indian Empire which had come to him by force of arms. The rigid Moslem historian al-Badaoni had no sympathy with this deep understanding, and when ordered in 1591 to collaborate in the translation of the *Mahabharata* into Persian he records his intense dislike of the undertaking, and his contempt for the great Hindu epic. Akbar's search for a religion which would satisfy him led him at the risk of his own assassination to invite Jesuit missionaries to explain the doctrines of Christianity.

Akbar took up art with enthusiasm. Humayun had decided that both he and his son should learn drawing and study painting, and in 1550 two rising Persian artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, came from Kabul and gave Akbar the knowledge and appreciation which afterwards led to the foundation of the Indo-Persian school of art.

He taught himself music, studied Hindu vocalization and was the patron of the great singer Tansen of Gwalior; though according to Abu-l-Fazl, the instrument upon which the Emperor played best was the kettle-drum.

But with all this he was intensely practical, a master of detail and uncommonly useful with his hands. One of his hobbies was to found cannon in his own arsenal; and his active brain was continually busy with inventions ranging from batteries which could be fired in salvos of seventeen guns with one match to useful devices in elephant gear and novel forms of travelling carriages.<sup>1</sup>

He mapped out for himself a most remarkable method of education. For an illiterate man whose only known writing is the laconic and childish signature reverently attested by Jahangir on the fly leaf of a *Life of Timur*,<sup>2</sup> Akbar's attainments may justly be termed unparalleled.

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I. pp. 112-115 . 128, 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Akbar*, Binyon, p. 11.

At the beginning of the Regency, Bairam Khan, a Persian Shia, had aroused considerable hostility by the fact that Tardi Beg whom he had executed for the loss of Delhi was a Sunni, the dominant sect in India; and the Protector's strong and arrogant rule added to the number of his enemies. Plots against Bairam Khan multiplied. To al-Badaoni "mountains were made of mole hills," but Abu-l-Fazl took a contrary view. It is clear, however, that while the Regent lived in state the Emperor was kept extremely short of money; and by the time he was eighteen Akbar had grown strongly to resent the restrictions put upon him.

The ladies of the court headed by the Emperor's foster-mother, Maham Anaga, persuaded Akbar to inform Bairam Khan that the Regency was at an end, and while the Emperor took the government into his own hands his minister was ordered to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The circumstances of his disgrace stung Bairam Khan into rebellion. He was defeated by the imperial troops, taken prisoner and then pardoned by Akbar, who once more ordered the fallen minister to go on his pilgrimage. Bairam Khan, furnished with the means suitable to his position and former services, set out for Gujarat. But he was not destined to see Mecca. He was murdered at Patan by an Afghan, and Akbar took his little son Abdurrahim under his protection, and when the boy grew up made him a general and khan khanan as his father had been before him.

During the next two years Akbar found that he had exchanged the Regent's leading-rein for the petticoat government of the court. Whatever half-formed ambitions may have passed through the mind of Bairam Khan, Maham Anaga's one object was to advance her reprobate son Adham Khan to power. She also brought into prominence Pir Muhammad Khan, a successful soldier, but a man of violent brutality.

With these counsellors Akbar entered upon his policy of aggression. The first blow fell on Malwa, which was overrun in 1560 by the troops of Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad. Drove of prisoners were killed and Rupmati, the beautiful consort of the defeated ruler Baz Bahadur, poisoned herself rather than fall into the hands of the conqueror.

*Malwa  
Campaign.*

Adham Khan began to make his own arrangements for the government of Malwa; while he sent no more than a few elephants to the Emperor, retaining the treasure, royal ensigns and all the captured women, royal ladies and dancing girls alike. But Akbar, although he allowed himself to be guided by his foster-mother, was no longer prepared to overlook infringements on his prerogatives, much less acts of sedition. Travelling faster than a warning message could be sent from Agra he suddenly appeared at Adham Khan's camp and accepted without comment the spoils of war which his unfaithful servant presented to him with the excuse that he had intended to offer them in person.

The Governor of Jaunpur, Ali Quli Khan Uzbek, now proved equally seditious, and Akbar, in the heat of July, hurried to that province and exacted a similar submission.

Adham Khan had been recalled from Malwa, and Pir Muhammad, in a position of absolute power in that State,<sup>1</sup> began a campaign through Khandesh and across the Narbada, "practising to the utmost the code of Chengiz Khan, massacring or making prisoners of all the inhabitants, and swept everything clean and clear . . . he robbed the crown from the pulpit, the turban from the preacher, the cupola from the mosque, the lamp from the minaret."<sup>2</sup> But retribution came swiftly. While retiring before the army of Raz Bahadur, Pir Muhammad was drowned when crossing the Narbada.

Akbar as he grew into full manhood began to realize his position and its responsibilities. To get to know his people he mingled in disguise among the crowds at night, on one occasion barely escaping recognition by a trick<sup>3</sup>; and early in 1562 by marrying the daughter of Raja Bihari Mal, the Rajput ruler of Jaipur, he proclaimed his determination to be a really Indian ruler and to found a truly Indian dynasty. Akbar's sympathy with his Hindu subjects and their religion dates from this marriage, which was followed eight years later by alliances with Rajput brides from Bikanir and Jaisalmir.

<sup>1</sup> Al Badaoni, Vol. II p. 46

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. II. pp. 46, 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Akbar-nama*, Vol. II. Ch. XXXVI.: "The strange story and wonderful adventure which happened to His Majesty the Shahinshah."

A precedent with far-reaching consequences was created when Raja Bihari Mal and his son were enrolled among the nobles of the imperial court.<sup>1</sup> The Rajput nobility had in the past been the solid bulwark of Hinduism as opposed to Islam. Akbar by his policy of securing them in their ancient privileges and at the same time throwing open to them military service and an official career under the crown, took the first step in the transformation of the Rajput chiefs from stubborn foes into the stoutest defenders of the empire.

As a preliminary towards ridding himself of the influence of Maham Anaga, whose powers amounted to those of a prime minister, Akbar appointed as his vizier Muhammad Khan Atka,<sup>2</sup> a loyal servant since before the second Panipat. In May 1562 Adham Khan made a desperate attempt to restore the family influence. He entered the palace with some followers and had murdered the minister, whom he found at his devotions, when Akbar met him, felled him to the ground with his fist and then had him thrown from the palace terrace. Maham Anaga died broken-hearted shortly afterwards, and the Emperor's foster-mother and her worthless son lie buried in a magnificent tomb erected by Akbar near the Kutb Minar.

The supreme control of affairs was now in Akbar's own hands. In the next two years he introduced two reforms. The first was the removal of the tax levied on pilgrims. The second, the abolition of the *jizya*, was in pursuance of the Emperor's policy of gaining the loyalty and support of his Hindu subjects. In finance, Akbar had given the eunuch Khwaja Malik I'timad Khan control over the revenues which, in Abu-l-Fazl's words, "were in the hands of embezzlers," and were now put on a sound basis by this able minister. I'timad Khan was succeeded by Raja Todar Mal, whose system of land revenue administration following the policy of Sher Shah still forms, though remotely, the basis of modern scientific methods.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Shamsu-d-din Muhammad Khan Atka.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 338.

Throughout his reign the Emperor pursued a systematic policy of aggression, the only alternative, in the state of India at that time, to a series of defensive wars to preserve his own throne from destruction. He built up his great empire by the sword, and consolidated his conquests by the subsequent exercise of tact, common sense and impartial justice. His ambition to enlarge his empire was, however, the sole reason for his unprovoked attack upon Gondwana in 1563. This country, which was admirably ruled by the able and beautiful Rani Durgavati, was invaded by an army under Asaf Khan. The Rani died in battle, and Chauragarh the capital was taken, together with immense booty, of which very little found its way to the Emperor.

The Uzbek nobles had done their full share to secure the throne for Akbar. But the Emperor's policy of concentrating all authority in his central and personal government violated their ideas of semi-independent fiefs. The discontented faction, headed by Khan Zaman Ali Quli Khan Uzbek, Governor of Jaunpur, who had greatly distinguished himself under Bairam Khan at Panipat, resolved to depose Akbar and make Kamran's son Mirza Abu-l-Qasim Emperor. The struggle between the crown and the feudal aristocracy came to a head when the Emperor summarily defeated the plot by having his nephew secretly executed in 1565, and the Uzbek nobles came out in open rebellion. The civil war went on until Akbar finally broke the power of the nobles at the battle of Manikpur in June 1567, and Ali Quli Khan was killed.

Early in the same year Akbar's brother Muhammad Hakim Mirza was driven out of Kabul by Suliman, the ruler of Badakshan, before the Emperor's troops, which he had asked for, could come to his help. On reaching India, Hakim was persuaded to put himself at the head of these reinforcements and seize the Punjab while Akbar was still fighting the Uzbek nobles in the eastern provinces. The Emperor, who looked upon the north-west frontier as a greater source of danger than the rebels in the east, came up by forced marches towards Lahore, and his brother, with the cavalry he had with him, beat a

hasty retreat. Returning to Kabul, Hakim surprised Suliman's forces and regained possession of the city.

Akbar's next objective, when he had crushed the Uzbek revolt, was the Rajput State of Mewar and the famous stronghold of Chitor. Eight miles of fortifications crowned the high rock rising from the plain, and the place, which had only been taken by Ala-ud-din Khalji after a six months' siege, was looked upon as practically impregnable. The Rana of Mewar had given sanctuary to Baz Bahadur, the fugitive ruler of Malwa, and on his refusal to give him up the Emperor declared war in 1567. The Rana, Udai Singh, unworthy of the name of Rajput, fled at the approach of the Mogul army, and "the brave and chivalrous Jaimal"<sup>1</sup> took command at Chitor.

The Moguls began their siege operations by mining, digging zigzag trenches, and driving galleries. But the explosion of the mines was not at first successful, the garrison built up the breaches in the walls as soon as they were made, and the besiegers in spite of their heavy guns could make no headway against the storm of musketry and artillery fire. At the end of six months, however, in the midst of an assault, Akbar shot down a Rajput leader who seemed to be directing the defence. An hour later the garrison had deserted the walls, and fire broke out at several places in the fort. It was the *jauhar*.<sup>2</sup> The dead leader was Jaimal, and in spite of the heroism of Fath Singh of Kailwa, a boy of sixteen, resistance was abandoned, and 8000 Rajputs came out to die to a man rather than surrender.

Akbar afterwards set up at Delhi statues of Jaimal and of Fath Singh mounted on elephants, but he sullied his victory by the massacre of 30,000 countrymen who had taken part in the defence. Enlightened far in advance of his age in his peace administration though he was, Akbar conducted war according to the time-honoured methods of his predecessors. Chitor was deserted, and the beautiful city of Udaipur became the new capital.

In 1569 Ranthambor, which was held by Rao Sujan the Hara chief of Bundi, a vassal of the princes of Mewar, surrendered after a

<sup>1</sup> Al-Badaoni, Vol. II. p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Akbar-nama*, Vol. II. p. 472.

stout resistance, and Akbar conceded honourable terms in exchange for a recognition of Mogul suzerainty.<sup>1</sup> Kalanjar opened its gates and the possession of these three great fortresses secured Akbar's position in Northern India. But Rana Partap Singh, who had succeeded Udai Singh, though frequently hard pressed by the Mogul forces, never submitted.

The hopeless disorder in Gujarat decided Akbar to take over the country, and in 1572 he marched to Ahmadabad and received the submission of its nominal ruler Muzaffar Shah. A cousin of the Emperor's, Ibrahim Hussain Mirza, remained, however, in the field. He was defeated at Sarnal in December of that year, and Surat fell two months later. During the siege of Surat the Emperor met Europeans for the first time in the small Portuguese force which had come to help in the defence. Instead of fighting, the Portuguese made a treaty with Akbar by which they agreed to facilitate the pilgrimages to Mecca. Ibrahim Hussain was not finally defeated until September 1573. In the height of the rainy season Akbar set out with 3000 men, covered about 600 miles in eleven days and completely surprised Ibrahim Hussain, "whose spies had seen Akbar in Agra fourteen days before."<sup>2</sup> The greatly superior forces of Ibrahim Hussain were routed and their leader taken prisoner.

Gujarat, in spite of periods of considerable unrest, remained under the government of the Moguls for nearly two hundred years, and the possession of so rich a province on the sea coast, and the great port of Surat, were of the highest value to the empire.

Sulaiman Kararani, the Afghan King of Bengal, had preserved his practical independence by formally acknowledging Mogul suzerainty. But his son Da'ud bin Sulaiman invited inevitable defeat by declaring war on the Emperor. The campaigns of 1574 and 1575 were each followed by peace negotiations and a renewal of hostilities by Da'ud, but in July

<sup>1</sup> The interesting peace treaty upholding Rajput honour, to be found in Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. III. p. 1482, can be read in the more accessible *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 35, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. pp. 241, 242.



1576 the King of Bengal was killed at the battle of Rajmahal and the country became part of the Mogul Empire.

On the night before Panipat, Akbar's kingdom lay within the encampment of his army. In twenty years, largely by the rapidity of his movements and the boldness of his leadership, he made himself master of India from Cutch to the Sunderbunds and from the Himalaya south to the Narbada. During the latter part of the reign the steady extension of the empire was as a rule brought about by his generals and rarely by Akbar in person. The religious rebellion of 1580 in Bengal and the Afghan campaign will be referred to later.

Kashmir, in its isolation, has never played a part in the great movements of Indian history. Its quiet valleys had *Later Conquests.* fallen under the authority of the Maurya Empire and of the nomadic conquerors from Central Asia. Hindu rule ended and the country became chiefly Muhammadan when the Prime Minister Mirza Shah, an adventurer from Swat, seized the throne and founded a Moslem dynasty in the first half of the fourteenth century. When the line came to an end the confusion and dissensions which followed greatly contributed <sup>1</sup> to the success of the Mogul invasion in 1587. In 1591 Akbar himself finally reduced the country to order.

Orissa had been added to the empire in 1590, Sind was subdued by the combined land and river war of 1592, while the highly unsatisfactory situation in Afghanistan was settled in 1594 by the capture of Kandahar, which followed the annexation of Baluchistan and Mekran.

In the closing years of his reign Akbar resolved to annex the Deccan, and when his embassies returned from the *The Deccan.* south in 1593 with the news that the Deccan kingdoms with the exception of Khandesh refused to acknowledge Mogul paramountcy, the Emperor determined on war. The imperial forces, led by the Emperor's son Prince Murad and Abdurrahim the Khan Khanan, invaded Ahmadnagar, then in the throes of two rival claimants to the throne. The capital was obstinately defended by

<sup>1</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. p. 260.

the Princess Chand Bibi, but the peace made in 1596 ceded Berar to the Emperor.

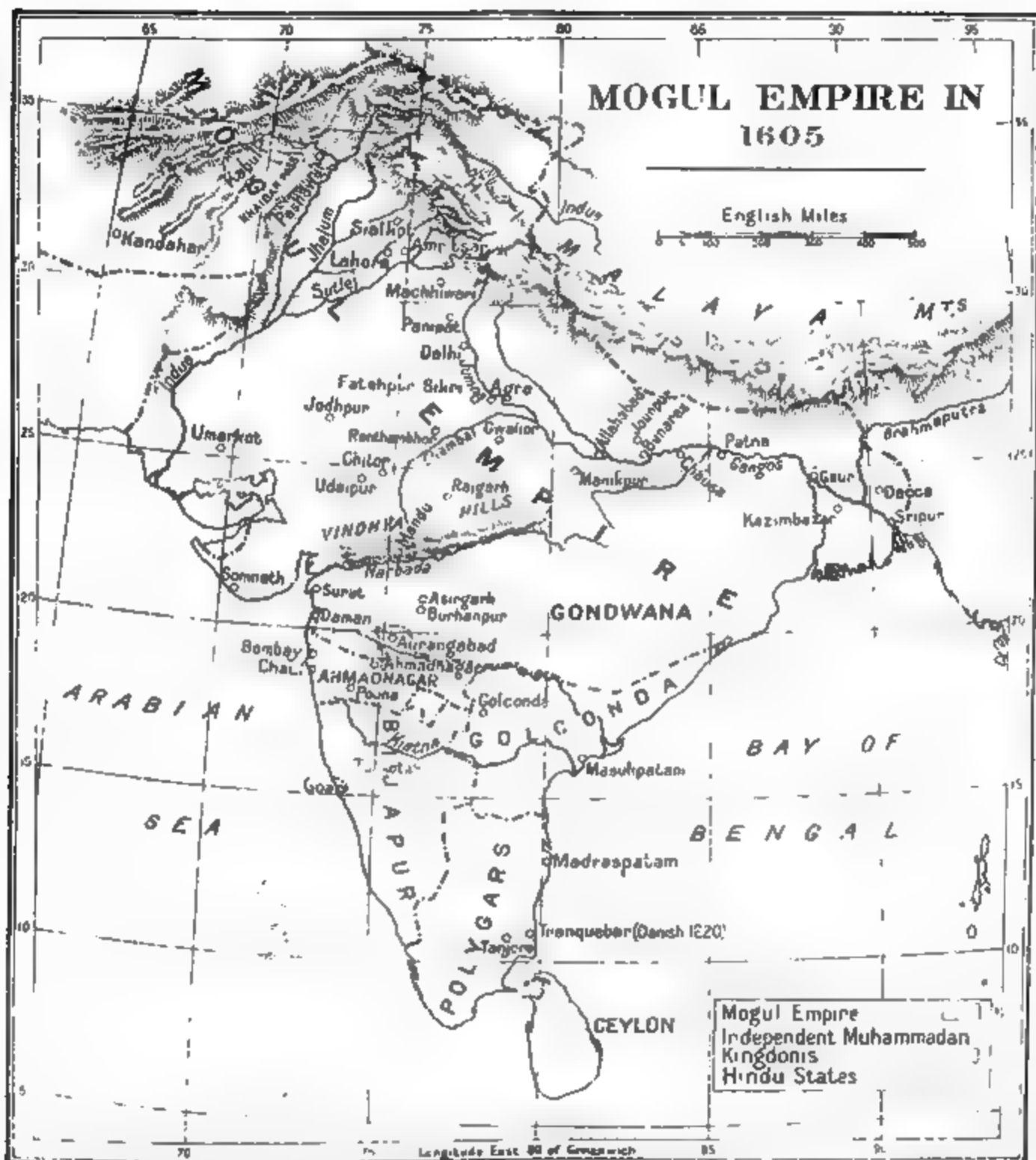
In the meanwhile the violent jealousy of Murad towards the Khan Khanan had weakened the Mogul leadership, and when the imperial army met the forces of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda, the result was a drawn battle. Akbar recalled Abdurrahim and appointed the minister and historian Abu-l-Fazl in his place. In May 1599, when Murad died of delirium tremens, the situation was at a deadlock, and at this juncture Miran Bahadur Shah of Khandesh joined the Deccani allies.

Akbar sent the Khan Khanan to the Deccan with a large force and came south himself, leaving the central government under the charge of the Prince Royal Muhammad Salim. The Khan Khanan, with Prince Daniyal, was ordered to take Ahmadnagar, and Akbar himself, after entering Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, went on and besieged Asirgarh.<sup>1</sup> The fortress was of immense strength, heavily armed and well provisioned, and the Mogul forces were unable to carry it by assault. In the midst of the siege, news reached Akbar that Salim had rebelled and set himself up as Emperor at Allahabad. But Akbar was determined to take Asirgarh, and succeeded by bribery where force had failed, the fortress surrendering in January 1601. Ahmadnagar, with the heroic Chand Bibi murdered, had fallen in August 1600. Akbar organized the country into three provinces under Prince Daniyal, and in May 1602 he returned to Agra as the proclaimed Emperor of the Deccan. Ahmadnagar had not, however, been properly subdued and soon reasserted its independence.

Salim asked his father's forgiveness and was made Governor of Bengal, but there was no real reconciliation between them until after the death of Daniyal in 1604, when Salim became the only son left to Akbar.

The conquest of the northern part of the Deccan was the last of Akbar's military operations. He did not live to carry his invasions further south, and Bijapur, Golconda and the small Hindu States which had survived the collapse of Vijayanagar, did not come within his empire.

<sup>1</sup> Firishta, Vol. II. pp. 276-278.





After the disappearance of the Sur dynasty, Akbar's wars were chiefly to extend his empire and were not waged in a struggle for existence. But the greatest crisis in his reign after Panipat was directly due to his unorthodox and intensely unpopular attitude towards Islam. This brought Bengal into open rebellion which threatened his throne, while the more veiled hostility of many of those surrounding him menaced him with assassination.

Strong Sufi influence came into his boyhood, but until he was thirty-three the Emperor was a practising Sunni, *Akbar's Religion.* regular in his devotions, a builder of mosques and a pious pilgrim whose favourite shrine was that of the saint Miyan-uddin Chishti at Ajmer. But Akbar's restless intellect in its quest of absolute truth in religion was not satisfied. The differences between the sects of Islam were disturbing and in 1575, the year before the great mosque at his new capital Fathepur-Sikri was finished, he built the Ibadat Khana. Here he summoned doctors of the Sunni and Shia, Hanifi and Sharifi sects to expound their doctrines, and where, as al-Badaoni records, feeling ran high, amidst shouts of "fool and heretic." From 1575 to 1578 he listened to the contending theologians with increasing doubt of Islam as the one true faith rising above his insatiable love of argument.

At this point another factor came into play. In the words of Laurence Binyon<sup>1</sup>: "Akbar, who to all things brought the test of conduct and experience, judged of religions far less by their abstract tenets than by their fruits in the life of those professing them. And only a year after the House of Worship had risen in its bright newness, a certain piece of news was brought to the capital which greatly impressed him. The first two Christian missionaries had arrived in Bengal. Their converts had defrauded the imperial revenue; the priests thereon refused them absolution. What was this creed which set its face against dishonesty even to a foreign government?"

Akbar was determined to find out, and after a visit to the court by Father Pereira, "a man of more virtue than learning," an imperial

<sup>1</sup> *Akbar*, pp. 91, 92.

message was sent to Goa for "two learned priests with the Law and the Gospel." The Emperor promised to welcome them and guaranteed his protection. Three Jesuit fathers were sent, Rudolf Aquaviva, Anthony Monserrate, and Francis Henriquez. Aquaviva, the leader of the party, son of the Duke of Atri, was only thirty years of age, and he greatly impressed the Emperor by his sanctity, his gentleness and the austerity of his life. Henriquez, a Persian convert from Islam, was the interpreter, and Monserrate, a Spaniard of Catalonia, became the historian of the mission. The Jesuits arrived at Fathpur-Sikri at the end of February 1580.<sup>1</sup>

Since the visit of Father Pereira two years earlier, Akbar had made considerable progress in his religious inquiries. "Crowds of learned men from all nations and sages of various religions and sects came to the court and were honoured with private conversations."<sup>2</sup> The faith of his own people had been left behind, and in 1579 Akbar took a step which may in some ways be compared with the action of Henry VIII forty-four years earlier in separating England from the Holy See. Henry was declared head of the Church in England but he showed in the Six Articles, and by burning persons expressing heretical opinions on the eucharist, that the Mass still mattered. Akbar, through Shaikh Mubarak, introduced in the Ibadat Khana the doctrine that a king should not be merely the temporal but also the spiritual guide of his subjects. This struck at the supremacy of the Koran as the one authority in Islam; and as the Act of Supremacy paved the way for the change of religion effected in England during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth, so the road was opened for the introduction of the Emperor's short-lived Din Ilahi.

Modern writers<sup>3</sup> whose opinions must be treated with respect, maintain that "Akbar in his reforms kept in view the Prophet's own sayings and the pronouncements of the most enlightened earlier doctors of the Islamic law." But al-Badaoni, whose pages blaze with indignation and invective, charges Abu-l-Fazl (who was a son of

<sup>1</sup> *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, Sir E. Maclagan, pp. 23-26.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Badaoni, Vol. II. p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. The Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali, *Islamic Culture*, Quarterly Review, October 1927.

Mubarak) and Hakim Abu-l-Fath with having "successfully turned the Emperor from Islam and led him to reject inspiration, prophethood, the miracles of the prophets and of the saints and even the whole law."

A document was drawn up<sup>1</sup> which was to some extent a compromise, and this was signed by a representative group of Moslems, including the Mufti of the Empire and the learned Khan of Badakhshan. Akbar was given the title of Iman-i-Adil (just leader), and it was laid down that in cases of conflicting opinions by the religious authorities the Emperor's decision should be binding. As al-Badaoni observes, the intellect of the iman became law, and opposition was impossible.

Religious toleration was established, but in such a form that the regulations issued by Akbar after 1579 pressed heavily upon orthodox Moslems. It is difficult to sustain the argument that the Emperor's object was to clean Islam of corrupt practices.<sup>2</sup> But the accusation of religious persecution may be weighed by comparing Akbar's methods such as the prohibition of new mosques and the removal of orthodox Moslems from the judicial bench with the position of Protestants in England during the reign of Mary Tudor, of Catholics in England under Edward VI and Elizabeth, and the penal laws as enforced in Ireland "where the law did not presume a Papist to exist" until 1793.

On the other hand, while adopting various Hindu customs, Akbar would not permit what he judged to be inhuman or unjust practices of Hinduism. He enacted that the custom of *sati* should not be carried out by force and he legalized the remarriage of widows, which was contrary to a strictly political policy of conciliating the Hindus.

His attitude towards the Jesuit missionaries was one of great and friendly interest. But as Akbar within a month of their arrival began publicly to perform the Parsee rites of sun-worship, and found in Christianity an intolerance of other faiths which was contrary to his instinctive feelings, while reports must have reached him of the

<sup>1</sup> Given *verbatim* by al-Badaoni, Vol. II. pp. 279, 280.

<sup>2</sup> But see article, "The personality of Akbar" in *Islamic Culture* for July 1927, by P. K. Menon, a Hindu writer.

Inquisition at Goa, it is not surprising that the conversations and the public discussions led to nothing.

The Emperor's religious experiments and his obvious prejudice against Islam aroused a storm of anger in the court and through the country. Bengal rose in rebellion in 1580 and the Qazi of Jaunpur, Mullah Muhammad Yazdi, issued a proclamation insisting on the duty of rebelling against the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> He and other leaders of the revolt were executed as traitors when captured but the rising took several years to suppress. It was made yet more serious by the aim of the rebels to replace Akbar by his half-brother Muhammad Hakim of Kabul, who supported the insurrection by an invasion of the Punjab.

Akbar decided that the more critical situation lay on the north-west frontier. He left the campaign in the eastern province to Raja Todar Mal and Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz while he undertook the operations against Muhammad Hakim in person. Muhammad had penetrated as far as Lahore with 15,000 cavalry, but when he found that the great fief-holders showed no intention of joining him his courage failed him and he beat a retreat.

Akbar in this campaign left nothing to chance. He had collected an army of about 50,000 men and 28 guns; and took with him Muhammad Qasim Khan, the architect of Agra Fort and the best engineer in the empire to make roads across the border. The Emperor sent forward heralds to announce his peaceful intentions towards the inhabitants, and he arranged for the payment of all supplies required for the army. Akbar left Fathpur Sikri in February 1581 and he entered Kabul, after trifling opposition, in August.<sup>2</sup> He allowed Muhammad Hakim to remain as ruler in Afghanistan until his death from drink four years later, when the country was absorbed in the empire.

Early in the campaign Akbar hanged his finance minister, who

<sup>1</sup> Al-Badaoni, Vol. II. p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> See Monserrate's *Commentary*, pp. 72 et seq. The Jesuit Father accompanied Akbar on the campaign and wrote a detailed account.



was now known as Khwaja Shah Mansur, for high treason. Opinions differ as to his guilt; it is maintained by Abu-l-Fazl and Monserrate, but al-Badaoni considered that "his numerous oppressions formed the halter round his neck," and is not alone in believing the vizier innocent of the charge. He had, however, been under suspicion for some time, though it is highly probable that at least the captured correspondence for which he was executed was forged. His ability and capacity for work in realizing arrears of taxes and preparing new assessments had been remarkable, but his strictness had roused the enmity of the *jagir* holders, and he had ruined numbers of the poorer classes.

When Akbar returned from Kabul in triumph the crisis was over, and in 1582 with his authority firmly re-established he entered upon the third stage of his religious progress. In his search for a personal religion which he could whole-heartedly follow, the Emperor had another object in view. He was determined to be a truly national ruler and, as Urdu had become a common language for his Moslem and Hindu subjects, so he wished to obliterate the antagonistic differences in religion by providing a faith which all alike could accept. None of those which he had investigated would serve his purpose.

A thousand lunar years had elapsed since the mission of the Prophet, and the Emperor, convinced that the era of Islam must be at an end,<sup>1</sup> proclaimed the *Din Ilahi*,<sup>2</sup> or Divine Religion, which was to establish uniformity of creed. Akbar declared himself to be the Vice-Regent of God on earth and the exponent of His commands; and his disciples and those whose diseases he was held to have cured prostrated themselves when he appeared.

The precepts of the new faith were simple. There was one God; and the sun, the stars or fire might be worshipped as the manifestation of the Deity. The conquest of evil passions and the practice of virtue and abstention from meat summed up a religion in which there was neither priest nor public worship. The novice was given a symbol,

<sup>1</sup> Al-Badsoni, Vol. II, pp. 310 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I pp. 162-167. "His Majesty as the Spiritual Guide of the People," and Abu-l-Fazl's preface to the volume.

possibly a likeness of the Emperor which, according to al-Badaoni, was worn on the turban.

Abu-l-Fazl was one of the strongest supporters of the *Din Ilahi*, but it made no appeal to the masses and was none too well received by the nobles of the court. One of the Emperor's closest friends, Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz, a son of Maham Anaga, was fearlessly outspoken in his criticism of the Divine Religion. Azam Khan was a distinguished general and an able provincial governor, but he is best remembered for his remark: "A man should marry four wives: a Persian woman to have someone to talk to; a Khurasani woman for his housework; a Hindu woman for nursing his children; and a woman from Transoxania, to have someone to whip as a warning for the other three."

The Rajput Raja Bhagwan Das, Commander of Five Thousand and Governor first of the Punjab and then of Bihar, never became a follower of the *Din Ilahi*, and his son Man Singh observed to Akbar: "If discipleship means willingness to sacrifice one's life I have already carried my life in my hand: What need is there of further proof? If, however, the term refers to Faith, I certainly am a Hindu. If you order me to do so I will become a Mussulman, but I know not of the existence of any other religion than these two."<sup>1</sup> The new religion died with Akbar.

Successful though he was in adding to his empire, Akbar's last years were clouded with sorrow. The Brahman wit and poet Mahesh Das, the bosom companion and disciple whom Akbar had made Raja Bir Bal, was killed in action on the north-west frontier in 1586 during a disastrous retreat.

In the same year Todar Mal died. He greatly distinguished himself as a leader of men, but his fame rests on his revenue work, which began when he became a minister in 1583. He at once introduced his reforms, made his new assessment and issued his coinage regulations. He also substituted Persian in the place of Hindi in government accounts.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Badaoni, Vol. II. p. 375.

In 1589 Akbar lost his comrade in arms Raja Bhagwan Singh, who had fought by his side at Chitor and in Gujarat.

Akbar's three sons were a bitter disappointment. Murad died of drink in 1599 and Daniyal followed him in 1604, the year in which the Emperor's mother Hamida died broken-hearted in her old age by family troubles.

Salim was more than a source of endless anxiety through his open disloyalty. He had reason to hate Abu-l-Fazl and he contrived the murder of his father's most faithful friend and counsellor for thirty-five years, when he was returning from the Deccan in 1602.

In September 1605 the Emperor was taken ill with dysentery. His constitution had always been magnificent, and he was not yet sixty-four, but plots were springing up for his grandson Khusru to succeed, and the load of anxiety and uncertainty proved fatal to his chance of recovery. On 22nd October, just a month after his illness began, he saw the Jesuit fathers for the last time, and when they came back two days later they were turned away. Prince Salim, backed by the nobles to whom he had sworn to uphold the faith of Islam, came at last into the presence of his dying father. Akbar could no longer speak but he opened his eyes and motioned to his son to put on the emblems of sovereignty, the imperial turban and the sword of Humayun. Then the Emperor signed to him to go; he had chosen his heir.

The end came in the early morning of 27th October 1605, and with his closest friends around him, the creed of the Prophet in his ears and the name of God upon his lips, Akbar died.

Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Padshah Ghazi was buried according to the rites of the Sunnis, which horrified the Jesuit fathers by their severe simplicity; and the son who had carried him to his grave through the broken wall of the red-sandstone fort of Agra reigned in his stead.

While Abu-l-Fazl and al-Badaoni have recorded their violently contrasting views <sup>1</sup> of the commanding personality who ruled India

<sup>1</sup> Al-Badaoni's opinion, which made the publication of the *Muratakhhab-ut-Tawarikh* impossible while Akbar was alive, is given with virulent frankness in Vol. II. pp. 348-350.

for nearly fifty years, the first Europeans to visit Upper India since the days of Asoka have given us a vivid description of the Emperor's appearance.<sup>1</sup>

“ One could easily recognize even at the first glance that he is the King. He has broad shoulders, somewhat bandy legs well-suited for horsemanship, and a light brown complexion. He carries his head bent towards the right shoulder. His forehead is broad and open, his eyes so bright and flashing that they seem like a sea shimmering in the sunlight. His eyelashes are very long. His eyebrows are not strongly marked. His nose is straight and small, though not insignificant. His nostrils are widely open as though in derision. Between the left nostril and the upper lip there is a mole. He shaves his beard but wears a moustache. He limps in his left leg though he has never received any injury there. His body is exceedingly well-built and is neither too thin nor too stout. He is sturdy, hearty and robust. When he laughs his face becomes almost distorted. His expression is tranquil, serene and open, full also of dignity and when he is angry of awful majesty.” He was then thirty-eight years of age. A pleasant touch is given by the remark that “ he drives a two-horse chariot in which his appearance is very striking and dignified.”

The Jesuit mission were deeply impressed by the Emperor's accessibility to his people, great and small—it is recorded of him that the Emperor was “ great with the great and lowly with the lowly”—and above all by his simple and straightforward nature; a conclusion which was reached by intimate personal observation. This is not, however, the opinion given by Father Daniel Bartoli, S.J., who published a history of the Mission of 1580–83 in Rome in 1663. Akbar figures here as a consummate dissembler, open in appearance, inwardly subtle and deceitful and bent only on his own aggrandizement.<sup>2</sup>

Like all the Mogul Emperors, with the exception of the abstemious Aurangzeb, and to a lesser degree Shah Jehan, Akbar indulged in excessive wine drinking, and Monserrate records that he used to

<sup>1</sup> *Monserrate's Commentary*, pp. 196, 197, 199

<sup>2</sup> Laurence Binyon's summary of Father Bartoli's judgement, *Akbar*, pp. 16–17.

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drink "*post*" (a mixture of diluted opium and spices) "until he sank back stupefied."

The most remarkable feature of Akbar's reign, more striking even than his conquests, his system of government, or the dream-city of Fathpur-Sikri which he abandoned fifteen years after it was built, was the overwhelming force of the Emperor's own personality. He, a foreigner, and a Moslem amidst a vast population of Hindus, had to rely entirely—until he had won over some of the Rajput chiefs—upon foreigners and Moslems like himself to support his throne. Yet these were the men, many of them fanatical, whose strongest feelings he outraged by repressive religious measures and by the open repudiation of Islam. The Emperor, who in 1577 granted to the Sikh community the site on which to build their temple at Amritsar, a few years later forbade not only the building, but even the repair of the mosques. Yet from the storm of indignation and the religious war which he brought upon himself he emerged stronger in authority than before. A born leader of men and one of the mightiest kings in history, Akbar transformed the Moguls from military adventurers into a great dynasty.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Akbar's System of Government

BABAR had been occupied with conquest; and Humayun had neither the ability nor the energy to reform the government of the Delhi Sultans which simply consisted in the exaction of tribute. It was left to the able usurper Sher Shah to create an administrative organization and revive, on easier terms, the land revenue methods of Ala-ud-din Khalji. Upon this foundation Akbar built up his military system of government.

The central government was the Emperor himself, and on his ability, energy and sense of impartiality the whole fabric of the Empire depended. An uncontrolled autocrat, policy and administration were the outcome of his own decisions, and he was the final judicial court of appeal.

The flaw in this system was its complete dependence upon the personal factor, and while the earlier emperors were strong and, with the exception of Aurangzeb, reasonably moderate and broad-minded, the later emperors were incompetent. The consequences have been summed up by one of the earlier administrators of the East India Company in Bengal.

"The Mogul dominion, in the best times, and under the wisest princes, was a government of discretion. The safety of the people, the security of their property and the prosperity of the country depended upon the personal character of the monarch. By this standard his delegates regulated their own demeanour: In proportion as he was wise, just, vigilant and humane the provincial viceroys discharged their respective trusts with zeal and fidelity, and as they possessed or wanted the recited qualifications the inferior agents conducted themselves with more or less diligence and honesty. A weak monarch and a corrupt minister encouraged and produced every kind of disorder: for there was no law paramount to the sovereign's will. Few of the

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officers of government were liberally paid; and property was left to accumulate, from breach of trust, abused patronage, perverted justice, or unrestrained oppression. . . . Long before [the Company took over the revenue administration of Bengal] the vigour of the empire had been irrevocably weakened; and its institution, as far as they can be traced in the ordinances and practice of its best princes, had been violated " <sup>1</sup>

Akbar's empire consisted of twelve (eventually fifteen) *subahs* or provinces under military governors who were called *subadars*. The province was divided into *sarkars*, or divisions, and each division into a number of *parganas*, or districts, which were the working administrative units. A district was in charge of a military commander and of a revenue collector; the former, like the provincial governor, presiding over the criminal court in addition to his duties of civil administration.

The Mogul government was a well-organized system of foreign domination imposed upon India by conquest; and the problem of holding together the provinces of which the Empire was composed was solved by carefully devised safeguards. The major provinces were administered by separate establishments which acted as checks upon each other. The governor of the province had his own strictly circumscribed powers which, incidentally, did not include direct authority over the civil magistrates' courts such as they were. The chief treasury officer (*diwan*) held an independent position and was responsible solely to the imperial treasury for the entire finance of the province, revenue, customs and expenditure; and it was this official and not the governor who took possession of the larger *jagirs* in the Emperor's name when the life-interest in these fiefs fell vacant by death. The fortified strategic points and the imperial ports on the seaboard were governed by officers who were appointed by the central authority and were not under the provincial governor's orders.

The Mogul emperors at the height of their power maintained an efficient army under their direct command which could defend the frontiers and suppress rebellion. It was only after the death of

<sup>1</sup> Minute made by Sir John Shore (Lord Teignmouth) in 1790; quoted in the Fifth Report of the Select Committee, House of Commons. The Report is printed in *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, Ascoli, see p. 107.

Aurangzeb, the last of the great emperors, when the governors swept provincial safeguards away and became absolute rulers in all but name, that these imperial deputies "had nothing to fear but an army from Delhi which was always coming but never came."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, with all these administrative precautions, the best and strongest safeguard was the good will of the people of India, which Akbar built up by his sympathetic understanding and which Aurangzeb by his fanaticism destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

The public service was, in theory, thrown completely open to Hindus as a career in the reign of Akbar. But the *Government Officials* Lists in the *Ain-i-Akbari*<sup>3</sup> show that out of 415 higher officials, 51 only were Hindus and that these were almost all Rajputs, whom it was Akbar's policy to conciliate; in forty years only two Brahmans appear in these upper grades. Of the rest there were very few Hindustani Mussulmans in the higher ranks of the army and civil service; the majority were Persians and Afghans. The whole service was directly under the Emperor's orders, and his acute judgement of ability and character is shown in his appointments. There was no regular promotion, entrance to the imperial service was by selection, and dismissal at the Emperor's pleasure.

Appointments were graded on a military scale borrowed from Persia, rising from "Commanders of Ten" up to "Commanders of Ten Thousand," the number indicating the quota of troops (cavalry ranking as the more important) that the officials were supposed to furnish in war, in addition to carrying out their peace duties. A "Five Thousand" commandership, the highest post open to persons not of royal blood until the latter end of Akbar's reign, carried a maximum salary of Rs. 30,000 a month and was worth at least 18,000 net income, with the purchasing power of the rupee five or six times as great as it is today.<sup>4</sup> The third grade of the lowest rank, "Commander

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Administration to the Dawn of Responsible Government*, Professor B. K. Thakore (Bombay), 1922, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> See the admirable summary made by Sivaji in his letter to Aurangzeb (Appendix to Ch. XI.).

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. pp. 308-528; and note on p. 536.

<sup>4</sup> Present value of the rupee is 18. 6d.



of Ten," drew Rs. 75 a month, the cost of upkeep of his section being about 44 rupees.

In spite of Akbar's regulations to remedy matters, irregularities were rife, as al-Badaoni and Abu-l-Fazl agree, and effectives fell far short of the official quotas. Officials were paid either in cash or by the *jagir* system which Akbar tried unsuccessfully to end. The pay was enormous,<sup>1</sup> but charges on salaries were heavy, and the later emperors were in the habit of withholding a varying number of months' pay during the year. Thrift was not encouraged, for the Emperor was heir to the estates of his officers; appearances had to be kept up; bribery may be said to have been essential; and *jagirs* were an uncertain source of income.

The Mogul Empire, in common with far less important Indian States, was essentially a land power and its fleet was negligible. The nearest approaches to an Indian navy are to be found in the Muhammadan privateers, who were to some extent protected by the Zamorin of Calicut in return for tribute, in the Chittagong pirates fostered by the ruler of Arakan and, most formidable of all, the piratical Maratha squadrons.

The army consisted of three establishments. The Emperor kept a relatively small body under his own command, and this included all the artillery, with its cadre of foreign specialists. Next in order of efficiency were the troops furnished by the "Commanders." The cavalry arm, with perhaps a quarter of a million effectives, in which Pathans and Rajputs predominated, was the one *corps d'élite*, the infantry consisting of a large and motley collection of fighting men and followers. Lastly came the territorial forces, raised when required by the landed proprietors (*zamindars*). The cavalry, whose strength is given as 343,000 in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, were serviceable troops, but the host of untrained, unpaid, pressed "foot soldiers," estimated at four million, can be left out of account.

There were no specialized departments, such as medical administration and public health, commerce and shipping, excise, education, agriculture, forests and police, which form the majority of the Central and Provincial subjects that are of so great an importance today. But

<sup>1</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar*, Ch. III.

revenue matters, involving the submission of assessment statements twice a year from every village, together with appointments and payment of salaries, which were accompanied by the interminable red-tape of an Indian public office, employed huge secretariats whether at the administrative headquarters of the Mogul Empire or the lesser bureaucracy of the zamorin's government in Calicut.

The classes who depended on State employment for their livelihood, of whom the more important at least were predominantly foreigners, have been summed up by W. H. Moreland,<sup>1</sup> in their relationship to the governed: "The higher ranks, while comparatively few in numbers, controlled the expenditure of a large proportion of the income of the country, and on their attitude depended the welfare of the classes by whom that income was produced. The lower ranks were at least sufficiently numerous to make up in the aggregate a substantial portion of the population; and from the economic standpoint they must be regarded as parasites, feeding upon the fruits of the worker's toil and, beyond an imperfect and precarious measure of security, contributing nothing to the common stock."

The benefits without payment which the mass of the people derived from the government were almost negligible. Roads were few and bridges infrequent; there was no organized medical assistance; and there is no evidence that Akbar's educational scheme ever materialized.<sup>2</sup> Charitable endowments only helped special classes and localities.

The upper classes were able to live much more luxuriously than they can today, allowing for the altered facilities of civilization. The middle classes formed a small and unimportant part of the community.

The overwhelming majority of the people of India have always been desperately poor, and the agricultural community, artisans and labourers lived even more hardly in the Mogul period than they do today. The rural population which consisted then, and still consists, chiefly of small-

*Poverty and  
Famine*

<sup>1</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I. pp. 278, 279; and cf. *India at the Death of Akbar*, note to p. 278

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holders and labourers, have always lived on the very margin of subsistence. Since the beginning of the twentieth century some economic progress has been made. But taking the most optimistic calculations of Indian and European professors at the Indian universities, the average income of India per head in 1922 was less than £8 in English money, while the corresponding figure for Great Britain was £95. Simple as are the needs of the people of India, the contrast is striking.<sup>1</sup>

Especially outside Bengal, the menace of famine through the failure of the rains hung over the country, nor was there any concerted relief policy in existence until the second half of the nineteenth century. Famine meant heavy mortality; and sixteenth-century accounts record the selling of children as slaves for about one rupee, and the dreadful recourse to cannibalism, as in 1555 and in 1596.<sup>2</sup> On this latter occasion Akbar started famine relief measures, but it is considered<sup>3</sup> that the organization then possible could hardly have done more than provide food for the starving in the towns.

The provincial governors were ordered to pay special attention to irrigation works, but these efforts were not systematic and, on precedent, would have been for the convenience to townships and travellers rather than for the benefit of the cultivators. The experiment of appointing colonization officers (*karoris*) in 1574 to increase the cultivated areas failed, and this al-Badaoni attributes to the cruelty and rapacity of the officials.<sup>4</sup>

Reviewing the evidence as to security of tenure in the time of Akbar, Moreland<sup>5</sup> comes to the conclusion that the peasant ran a real danger of having his holding taken from him by officials, a possibility which Bernier noted had the inevitable result of keeping the country badly cultivated.

The predominating industry of India has always been agriculture, which still entirely occupies more than 70 per cent. of the population, as against 8 per cent. in England. India has remained throughout the ages a land of almost innumerable

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Badaoni*, Vol. II. p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 128-130.

villages,<sup>1</sup> and the conditions of a peasant's life have changed very little since Mogul times, when due allowance is made for the security which British government has given to the country. Professor Thakore<sup>2</sup> has described "the villager . . . his children growing up in squalor almost like cattle, his cattle sharing the same room and the same affection as his children, and the dust and the glare over all." The rural population has always lived in this way, in its mud hovels or bamboo huts.

The fields of the cultivators, ranging from about five acres in the south and east to about two and a half acres elsewhere, are scattered about the neighbourhood of the village, and are farmed by the family, helped by occasional hired labour and a pair of bullocks. In normal times this provides for their meagre standard of living. The Government of India in its modern reports on agriculture makes reiterated appeals to individual initiative, and these are seconded by the efforts of the educated classes interested in agriculture to institute up-to-date methods of farming. But the small-holders, who are the farmers of India, are slow to abandon the ways of their forefathers.

The cluster of huts forming an Indian village is today what it was in the early Indo-Aryan kingdoms, a self-contained community. Originally the headman was nominated by the king; later the office became hereditary. The village is governed, now as in the days of Akbar, by its headman, with his satellites, the accountant and the watchman, who are usually hereditary office-holders.

The accountant keeps the record of the villagers' land rights and the individual accounts due for land revenue. He also reports upon the crops; and it may be said that, under modern conditions, the Indian crop forecasts which influence the world's grain markets are based on the figures of the village accountants.

The village watchman, or *chaukidar*, has been the real foundation of law and order in rural India since Indian history began. In the

<sup>1</sup> In all India, with its population of 353 millions, there are not today 2000 towns with over 5000 inhabitants; nearly 90 per cent. of the people live out in the country, the percentage in England being about 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Administration to the Dawn of Responsible Government.*

districts today the effectiveness of the police administration is bound up with the village watchmen. The police stations, each with its station officer and about a dozen constables, scattered through a district of modern India, cannot possibly exercise close supervision. The more remote villages in particular normally rely upon the *chaukidar*, who reports crime, arrests offenders, keeps his eye on suspicious characters, and helps the police with local information when a case is investigated in his village.

On these three functionaries, the headman, the watchman and the accountant representing law, order and the revenue system in half a million villages, the practical administration of India has always rested—however largely the march of conquerors and the magnificence of Oriental courts may figure in the pages of history.

A village has its local priest, a religious mendicant and, in all except the smallest hamlets, the carpenter and the smith, the weaver, the potter and the oil-presser are to be found carrying on their trades, much as their forebears did two thousand years ago.

Some of the villagers may have a permanent title in their lands as owners, or as tenants with hereditary rights of occupancy, and these holdings are sometimes wholly or partly sublet. Below the smallholders come the labourers, frequently of different caste from the actual cultivators; and at the bottom of the scale are the members of the depressed classes, who earn their daily bread by casual labour, working in leather, or some other menial employment.

The demand for the village produce, should there be some town in the neighbourhood, is small, and even today relatively few of the villages of India have been touched by metalled roads or railways. Nor has modern civilization in other ways greatly affected the immense agricultural population in the great stretches of country where post offices are many miles apart and telegraph offices even more distant from each other. But this is a matter of indifference to communities in which ability to write a letter is looked upon as remarkable, and enough education to read a vernacular newspaper is rarer still; and where, as often as not, some wandering pedlar brings the news from the outside world. The general outlook upon life is much the same in a twentieth-century Indian village as in the days of Akbar. What-

ever changes the future may bring, the village horizon is still bounded by weather and water, crops and cattle, festivals and fairs, family ceremonies, the dread of famine which the Government of India has for some time happily lessened, and the weight of the debt owed to the local money-lender.

The assessment of Todar Mal, Akbar's finance minister, is the connecting link between the land revenue system of ancient India and the method followed by British administration of the territories under its rule. The land revenue system, by which the Indian peasant still makes direct or indirect payment to the State, is one of the oldest universal institutions in the country, and is prescribed in the sacred law of Hinduism.

The earliest references show that the payment was made in kind, under the supervision of the village headman, or some other official, a reasonable proportion being considered as one-sixth of the gross produce, or even up to one-third in cases of emergency. This payment in kind of the "King's Share" is the origin of the land revenue system as it exists today.<sup>1</sup> Government demands may at times have risen to half, but the Muhammadan conquests made little alteration in an arrangement which accorded with the existing institutions of Islam. Money payments of the revenue were known in the pre-Moslem period, but the use of coined money for this purpose became more general as the Muhammadan kingdoms expanded in the sixteenth century. Assessments levied uniformly for a series of years had been made in Hindu India long before the days of Sher Shah and Todar Mal. The land revenue due upon the large extent of territory left in the hands of Hindu chiefs under Moslem rule was met by the payment of a fixed tribute, and the local rulers were given a free hand in raising the money from the peasants.

Akbar's revenue system varied in different parts of the country. In Sind the original Indian practice was followed, a proportion of the produce was taken, and the risk of a bad year was equally shared by government and cultivator. But in the most productive part of the country, from Bihar up to Lahore and Multan, the standard of

<sup>1</sup> See W. H. Moreland in Ch. X., *Modern India* (ed. Sir John Cumming).

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revenue payments was set by the regulation system of assessment. Akbar fixed his claim at one-third of the average yield over a period of ten years, a method which transferred much of the risk to the peasant and practically made him a cash-paying tenant. At the same time the heavy government claim of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. left him with an exceedingly small surplus, even in a good year. The maintenance of himself and his family, occasional replacement of cattle and implements, and wages, have been calculated to amount (in Northern India) to about one-half of the gross yield in a favourable season. A very slight loss due to accidents of season would absorb the whole balance.<sup>1</sup> The gross income per head of the rural population has not changed by any large proportion, the difference between the peasant of Akbar's time and the present day being, in this respect, that the modern tenant-cultivator has more money to spend when seasons are bad.

In addition to the revenue derived from the land there was a tax on salt which raised the price of this necessity of life to a high figure. It was not, however, a new impost levied by the Moguls. Like the land tax it had been known in India since the days of the Mauryas, when salt was a State monopoly on which transit as well as import duties were levied; and it was a royal monopoly in the time of the Gupta dynasty. The Mogul government, certainly in Bengal,<sup>2</sup> taxed salt by a high transit duty and also by leasing out, for an annual sum, the monopoly to manufacture it.

Until the British supremacy, Akbar, more nearly than any ruler since Asoka, approached the idea of a united India. This dream of an imperial sway over the whole country is to be found interwoven, from the earliest times, with the religion and the political thought of its people. One of the oldest of Hindu public rites was the Rajasuiya sacrifice, which was celebrated by a king who threw out a challenge of supremacy to the world, and making good his challenge by victory over a great oppressor and the raising of the oppressed to happiness and prosperity, won the title

<sup>1</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar.*

<sup>2</sup> *Political and Military Transactions in India*, Prinsep, Edn. 1825, Vol. II. p. 433.

of Chakravartin.<sup>1</sup> The same idea of supremacy is to be found in the works of Manu, who places among the duties of the king the obligation to increase his territory.<sup>2</sup> Akbar's efforts to combine the opposing elements of Hinduism and Islam endangered his throne; the "universal faith" which he offered to his subjects died with him; and his successors soon forgot the principles which made Akbar a truly national ruler.

Although actually embodied in the allegiance of the Princes of India to the paramountcy of the British crown,<sup>3</sup> visible political unity was not manifested in name until Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1877.<sup>4</sup> Yet as Joseph Davey Cunningham wrote in 1849,<sup>5</sup> "Hindustan, from Kabul to the valley of Assam and the island of Ceylon is regarded as one country, and dominion in it is associated in the minds of the people with the predominance of one monarch or of one race." This instinct had, moreover, found expression in the aspirations of the Sikh Guru Govind eighty years after Akbar's death, and explains the attitude of Indian rulers, Moslem and Maratha alike, towards the emperors long after Mogul power had become only a name.

One of the great forms of literary expression in Hindu India, especially during the golden age of the Guptas and Harsha, was the drama, but until the nineteenth century Moslem drama did not exist. The nearest approach is found in the varied themes of shadow plays. "The magic shadow shapes that come and go" in Fitzgerald's version of Omar's *Rubaiyat* and the place of the Hindu theatrical company was filled at a Muhammadan entertainment by the story-teller. The well-known collection of *The Arabian Nights* was compiled in the tenth century, and there is evidence which points to an Indian origin of the stories.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Making of India*, A. Yusuf Ali, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> *The Institutes of Manu*, Edn. 1825, Vol. II Ch. VII.

<sup>3</sup> See *Report of the Indian States Committee*, Cmd. 3302 of 1929, para. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Royal Titles Act, 1876, Proclamation in India, 1st January 1877.

<sup>5</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, Edn. 1918, p. 275.

<sup>6</sup> *Indian Quarterly Review Islamic Culture*, I, Jan. 1927, Art. by J. Horowitz.



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Religious writings, works on jurisprudence and on Arabic grammar are important features in Moslem literature, but the most celebrated literary productions in India of the period are the works on history. Muhammad Qasim Firishta, Abu-l-Fazl Allami and Abdu-l-Qadir Ibn-i-Mulk Shah (al-Badaoni) all wrote in Akbar's reign.

No Hindu historian of India had appeared since Bana wrote his history of Harsha in the seventh century; and the course of great events when the Mogul Empire was at the height of its power and vigour is seen from the Muhammadan standpoint, with the glimpses afforded by the Jesuit mission to the imperial court and the accounts of European visitors to the country. The chronicles of the old Hindu kingdoms are nearly all of them lost, but some of those of the Rajput States were collected more than a century ago by Colonel James Tod and published in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. In the eighteenth century a number of histories were written in Persian (the official language) by high-caste Hindus.

In the lists of poets, with quotations from their works, given in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Shaikh Abu-l-Faiz-i-Faizi is as distinguished as his brother Abu-l-Fazl is renowned as a historian. Faizi wrote poetry for forty years, spending his money on charity and devoting his skill in medicine to the poor.

But no mention is made of the greatest poet of the reign, Tulsī Das, who wrote what Vincent Smith has described as "that most celebrated work" the noble Hindu poem entitled the "*Ram-charit-manas*," familiar to all Hindus in Upper India, on the theme of the *Ramayana*.

Painting had been originally restricted in the Islamic world to conventional designs, and portrait and other subject-painting was introduced later in countries under the looser Persian influence. On the other hand, Hindu genius had long ago expressed itself in the frescoes of Ajanta and afterwards in the early Rajput paintings. Akbar instituted weekly exhibitions of pictures to encourage Indian artists to come to his court. The Persian influence so clearly seen in the earlier examples of the Mogul school founded by the emperor gave place to Hindu ideas

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and treatment when Hindu artists, amongst whom were Daswanth, Basawan, Kisir and Maskin, began to outnumber the Persian court painters. In the end the Indian style of art predominated. The great artist Daswanth had been a palki-bearer, whose sketches drawn upon a wall attracted Akbar's notice.<sup>1</sup> Laurence Binyon has observed that Rembrandt made drawings based on Mogul paintings. In its later phases Mogul art came to borrow more from Europe than from Persia, but these borrowings were never really assimilated.

Nearly all the paintings of Akbar's reign are found in manuscripts. These are themselves examples of the beautiful and elaborate penmanship and illumination which are an orthodox form of Islamic art.

Under Akbar, Mogul architecture created a series of masterpieces.

*Architecture* In the words of Abu-l-Fazl<sup>2</sup>: "His Majesty plans splendid edifices, and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay."

The Emperor introduced Hindu styles of architecture in many of his buildings, as in the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra fort and at Fatehpur-Sikri—with the exception of its incomparable mosque and the magnificent Buland darwaza.

In regard to the decorative art of the period "the choicest Italian work does not surpass, if it equals, the superb carving on the white marble cenotaph of Akbar which occupies the topmost storey of his mausoleum at Sikandra."<sup>3</sup>

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1556. Accession of Akbar.  
Battle of Panipat.  
Bairam Khan became Regent.
- 1560. Fall of Bairam Khan.
- 1562. Court influence ended with the death of Adham Khan.
- 1563. Conquest of Gondwana.

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Court Painters of the Grand Mogul*, by Laurence Binyon, with coloured and other illustrations (Oxford University Press), 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I. p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, V. A. Smith, 2nd Edn. revised by K. de B. Codrington (Oxford), 1930. A full description of Mogul architecture and a series of admirable illustrations are given in this work.

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- 1567. Battle of Manikpur ended Uzbek revolt.
- 1568. Fall of Chitor.
- 1569. Birth of Prince Salim (Jahangir).
- 1569-1576. Building of Fatehpur-Sikri.
- 1573. Conquest of Gujarat.
- 1576. Battle of Rajmahal and annexation of Bengal.
- 1578. The first Jesuit Mission.
- 1579. The Decree of Iman-i-Adil.
- 1580. The Bengal Rebellion.
- 1581. Kabul Expedition.
- 1582. Proclamation of the *Din Ilahi*.
- 1587. Conquest of Kashmir.
- 1592. Conquest of Orissa and Sind.
- 1593-1601. The Deccan Campaign.
- 1594-1595. Annexation of Baluchistan and Mekran. Capture of Kandahar: Afghanistan absorbed in Mogul Empire.
- 1595-1598. Famine and plague.
- 1596. Annexation of Berar.
- 1599. Conquest of Khandesh.
- 1600. Fall of Ahmadnagar; Surrender of Asirgarh.
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## CHAPTER IX

### The European Trading Companies

THE beginning of the seventeenth century witnessed the appearance in India of the Dutch and the English to put an end to the Portuguese monopoly, which had lasted a hundred years, and take their share in the Indian trade.

The Indian merchants with whom they had to deal were experienced business men, Muhammadans and Hindus, who controlled the wholesale trade in the different localities, subject to government intervention from time to time to create a state monopoly. Throughout the country there were recognized market prices, influenced by varying supply and demand; there were rings and combines; financial machinery for credit, exchange and insurance, including war risks and an overdue market, and the use of brokers had been developed; and although there were no bankruptcy laws the institution was generally recognized. In the Mogul Empire the standard coin was the silver rupee, approximating to that now in use. The currency of Southern India was based on a gold standard and the chief coin, equal to about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  of Akbar's rupees, is known in European writings as the "pagoda."

The chief agricultural produce consisted of cereals (wheat, barley and rice), millets, pulses, oil seed, sugar-cane, cotton and hemp, indigo (though hardly any in Bihar), drugs (poppy and betel), pepper and spices. Wheat was quoted at 80-85 lbs. for the rupee, inferior grades of rice were cheaper, but in times of famine wheat rose to seven times its normal price. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the tobacco plant was acclimatized in Gujarat, and later on the Coromandel coast. The fishing industry and the pearl trade in the south, were conducted as they are today.

In Akbar's time the production of gold and silver was negligible.

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Northern India mined copper, Southern India imported it. The whole of India relied on its own resources for iron, which could only be worked where wood for smelting was available within reach of the ore. Coal was not mined. There were two important diamond fields in the Deccan. Salt was obtained from the Sambhar lake, the Punjab mines and the water of the sea, sources of supply which have not changed with the centuries.

The milling of grain was, generally speaking, a domestic undertaking as it is today. The spinning-wheel and the *Manufactures.* hand loom were entirely village industries. Spirits and fermented liquors were common. Highly skilled craftsmen supplied the luxury market with such articles as jewellery and perfumes.

Cotton weaving was by far the most extensive industry in India (agriculture excepted), though most of the people, unlike the Vedic Indians of early days who generally wore woollen garments, had nothing more than a cotton cloth about their loins. In Bengal jute to some extent took the place of cotton loin cloths. Carpet-making was introduced by Akbar at Agra and Lahore, but the output was small. Silk weaving was quite a minor industry at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In the sixteenth century there was a steady demand in India for a limited range of foreign goods. Gold and *Imports and* silver being required for coinage and to an even *Exports.* greater amount for display, headed the imports. Horses were needed in large numbers as remounts for the army. Deficiencies in metal, copper, tin, zinc, lead and quick-silver, had to be made up. The list of luxuries was a longer one, and included precious stones, such textiles as silks, velvets and brocades, European wines, African slaves and anything rare or unusual. To pay for these imports India exported in the main textiles and pepper, and minor items such as spices, indigo and opium.

The ports of Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi did not exist. *Ports.* Surat, Broach and Cambay, then the most important harbours in India, with Surat as the point of departure for Mecca, were, after 1573, under Mogul rule. The Portuguese commanded the trade route into the Gulf by their

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possession of Diu and the mainland settlement of Daman. Lower down the coast were Goa and Cochin, the former being the Portuguese centre for the overseas trade. Goa had risen to prosperity by its traffic with Vijayanagar, and the extinction of the wealthy Hindu kingdom was a contributory cause of the decay of Portuguese power in India. On the Coromandel coast Masulipatam, the port of Golconda, traded with Pegu and Malacca. Sripur on the Meghna, the eastern capital of Bengal until shortly after the death of Akbar, owed its importance to its position on a waterway which led to Agra.

Land transport conditions, bad roads, few bridges, and the absence of wheeled-traffic south of Golconda, diverted the goods traffic of India wherever possible from bullock-carts, camels and pack oxen to coasting vessels. On the western coast the constant danger of pirates enforced the use of convoys, but this was preferable to the exactions of extortionate local officials on land and the activities (not unknown in Europe at the time) of robbers on the roads.

Comparatively little trade crossed the land frontiers, and there were only two regular routes; from Lahore to Kabul, *Caravans.* which tapped the main caravan road between Western China and Europe; and from Multan to Kandahar, which connected up with Persia. These routes through the highlands across the border were only used at intervals, and by strong bodies of men, who protected themselves from the marauding tribesmen by piquetting heights, and made their way through the country by paying blackmail to fort commanders.

From the time of the Maurya emperors inland transit dues had been a regular source of revenue in India. This *Transit Dues.* greatly handicapped internal trade, and one of Jahangir's first orders was an attempt to put an end to the levy of road and river tolls within the empire.

Foreign merchants living in India were not then, as they would be now, in any way under the laws of the country. *Position of Foreign Traders.* The settlement of foreigners in Asiatic countries was not a matter of course. It was only allowed by conventions made with the sovereign power through the local

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authorities, and the communities thus formed enjoyed extra-territorial privileges under resident governors of their own.<sup>1</sup>

The Portuguese ignored this arrangement. Their first experience had been at Calicut, where they were welcomed by the zamorin's subjects who were interested in the import trade, but strongly opposed by the Arab and Egyptian communities controlling the exports to the Red Sea ports. The opposition was successful and the Portuguese failed to get their concession. As representatives of the King of Portugal and not as merchants they subsequently relied on their naval power to force concessions, or to seize territory, over which they exerted the rights of sovereignty, although some later settlements, such as Hooghly,<sup>2</sup> were founded more in accordance with Oriental custom.

The merchants of Holland and England when they arrived in India accepted the position as they found it, and established by negotiation what amounted to self-governing colonies. The original English and Dutch plans for trading with India and the Far East had not contemplated settlement abroad, but merely voyages to sell their goods and return with eastern merchandise. Force of circumstances changed the organization from trading voyages to the local agencies known as factories; from these factories to forts; and eventually the forts expanded into territorial sovereignty.

On their first voyages the trading companies found that many of the articles popular in Europe were unsaleable in India and that there was not a large demand for any of their goods. Cargoes were cut down to limited amounts of woollen cloth, lead, cutlery and fancy articles, and these were altogether insufficient to meet the cost of the merchandise they required from India.

The problem, as it presented itself to the English merchants,

*The Problem of  
Purchasing Power.*

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Moreland in Ch. VIII. of *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* (1923). In *India at the Death of Akbar* (1920), p. 247, the same author merely states that it is "probable that such agreements were the regular practice."

<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1537, according to Sir W. Hunter's *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (2nd Edn., 1885), Vol. V. p. 490. But reasons for putting the date perhaps as late as 1575 are to be found in A. Abdul Ali's article in *Islamic Culture*, July 1933.

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was to find the purchasing power for the indigo and calico which they wished to buy in Surat, and the raw silk which came almost entirely from Persia. The simplest solution would have been to pay in gold and silver, which India would have welcomed. There was, however, a strong prejudice in England against what Sir Thomas Roe called bleeding to enrich Asia, and the export of coin was strictly limited by the government. An alternative was to borrow capital in India. But the amount available was not large, the rates of interest (about 18 per cent.) was crippling to enterprise, and this expedient could only be used in emergencies. The method adopted by the English Company and by the Dutch was to employ part of the available capital exclusively for trade in Asia, and send home the profits which were earned but not the capital itself.

The giving of presents to gain the patronage of the authorities, "particularly the Great Mogul," was the company's equivalent to the outlay of modern firms in advertisement, a commercial necessity. In 1639 the English factors wrote that they might obtain any concession in reason from Shah Jahan in return for a present of "toys." The gifts required by the Emperor included "large looking-glasses, English mastiffs, our King's Majesty's picture, large, in Parliament robes, a pair of gloves, and a good buff coat."

The East India Company began at once to develop, on a rising demand for calico, a flourishing trade in Indian plain and printed piece-goods, and to undersell the more expensive continental linen. England at that time made hardly any linen, while the Dutch were large linen manufacturers and delayed entering a trade which would have injured their home markets.

But about 1676 calico printing works were established near London. The new industry objected strongly to the cut-prices of Indian printed calicoes and joined the silk-weavers and woollen manufacturers of the country in agitation that the growing use of fabrics from a foreign country, which India then was, threatened the ruin of home industries. Opposition to the imports from India



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grew stronger, serious riots of the working people occurred in 1696 and 1697, and in 1700 an Act was passed<sup>1</sup> forbidding the wear of Asiatic silks and printed and dyed calicoes, though these could still be brought in for re-exportation.

In addition to purely protective measures, the war with France obliged Queen Anne's government to raise money for revenue purposes by indirect taxation, and duties were levied from 1703 onwards on piece-goods, spices, pepper and other articles.<sup>2</sup>

In 1720 violent protests from the English woollen and silk manufacturers induced Parliament to forbid the use, with certain exceptions, of calicoes dyed or printed in England. This prohibition was maintained until 1774, when the British calico printers were once more allowed to dye and print stuffs made wholly of cotton, provided that these were manufactured in Great Britain. The measures taken to protect the woollen industry were due to the fact that it was then still looked upon as the main source of the nation's wealth.

Speaking generally English trade policy with India throughout the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries followed the broad principles accepted by all European countries at that time. The most important of these was trade monopoly. The second was the regulation of foreign trade for the protection of home industries, with measures to supply these industries with their raw material. The third principle was that on balance each branch of foreign trade brought into the country more wealth than it took out.<sup>3</sup>

In the seventeenth century, with none of the inventions which have brought the most distant places within easy reach and immediate touch of each other, affairs in the East bore at times little relation to the political situation in Europe. Holland and the government of Spain and Portugal made a twelve-year truce in 1609, with effect in

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. V. p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, C. J. Hamilton (Calcutta), 1919 pp. 107, 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

the East from 1610; but the Dutch and the Portuguese fought in spite of its terms. Portugal and England had no quarrel in Europe, and England was at peace with Spain after 1604; yet a Portuguese squadron attacked Best and his two ships off Goa in 1612, to be heavily repulsed, and two years later the King of Spain ordered the Portuguese Viceroy to drive the English out of India; while in 1618 Dutch and English ships were fighting east of the Strait of Sunda, to the horror of their respective home governments when they heard of it.

The union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580 had threatened the trade between Holland and Portugal with extinction. This, combined with the strong national spirit of the new commercial centre at Amsterdam, inspired the Dutch merchants to make a bid for the eastern markets, and the early ventures owed their success to the reports on the Portuguese position in the East, furnished by Jan van Linschoten. This remarkable man became secretary to the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa at the age of twenty and remained in India from 1583 to 1592, when he returned to Holland. His *Itinerario* is a brilliant and encyclopædic account of every conceivable condition in the Portuguese Eastern Empire, and gives a clear appreciation of its points of strength and weakness.<sup>1</sup>

As the expeditions to the East Indies which began under Cornelis de Houtman in 1595 started injurious competition and risked glutting the European market with spices, the States General of Holland intervened. In March 1602, fifteen months after the London East India Company was formed, the combine known as the Dutch Limited Company was embodied. It had a large capital and it was backed by the formidable sea-power of Holland. The company, whose policy was guided by its seventeen directors, had the exclusive right to trade in all countries between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, and within these limits was empowered to make war and peace, annex territories and build fortresses.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. V. p. 29.

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*Influence of  
Sea Power.* The pre-companies, as the pioneer ventures were called, had thought only of trade and how to avoid the Portuguese. But the strong fleets which were now sent out each year boldly attacked the Portuguese at Mozambique, Malacca and Goa. They failed at these strongly held places but they won a foothold in the Spice Islands; and by the effective use they made of their squadrons the Dutch gained the command of the Eastern seas. Portuguese India had been built upon naval supremacy and its loss was utter ruin.

*Rise of the  
Dutch.* The Dutch soon found that the merchandise they brought from Europe was not saleable in the Spice Islands, where Indian cotton goods were the recognized trade medium, and to meet this difficulty they established agencies in India to provide them. In 1605 they started factories at Masulipatam and Nizampatam in Golconda, and a year later at St. Thomé and Negapatam. Trouble arose over the heavy import and export duties levied by the local authorities, but this was remedied; and the Portuguese attempt to drive the Dutch from the Coromandel coast in 1612 was successfully resisted.

But no conquest or expansion in India ever tempted the seventeen to abandon their main object, which was to gain the monopoly of the trade in spices and pepper, then the great commercial link between Asia and Western Europe. In 1609 a Governor-General and a Council of the Indies had been appointed and ten years later Jan Pietersoon Coen, the creator of Batavia, by the ruthless energy of his administration founded the Dutch Eastern Empire. From then onwards the Dutch began to export slaves from Bengal and other places, buying them regularly from Indian dealers with the permission of the authorities.

The East India Company's efforts to divide the Far Eastern trade with the Dutch at the expense of the Portuguese came to an end after the tragic occurrence at Amboyna in 1623. Frequently referred to as a "massacre," the actual facts were bad enough. Ten members of the English factory there, with a Portuguese and nine Japanese were tortured and put to death by the Dutch authorities after an irregular trial on the charge of conspiracy to seize the local

fort. After 1624 the East India Company retained only one pepper factory in the island of Sumatra. By the Treaty of Westminster in 1654 Cromwell exacted belated reparation for Amboyna, and damages were paid to the relatives of the sufferers. The sum of £85,000 was awarded to the company as indemnity in respect of its own claims, but the Commonwealth government promptly borrowed £50,000 and did not repay it.<sup>1</sup>

The Dutch had opened up commercial centres at Surat and Ahmadabad in 1616 and in Agra two years later; and by 1653 they had developed a prosperous trade on the Hooghly and at Patna. By heavy reinforcements of ships and men from Europe they completed the conquest of Ceylon from the Portuguese in 1660, and the Malabar coast settlements by 1663. The Portuguese, their power broken and their trade destroyed, were left with Goa, Daman and Diu.

The English company had built up their connexions through friendly negotiations with the Mogul emperors and the Portuguese; the Dutch by the consistent use of their sea-power in capturing the ships and fortified places of their Portuguese rivals. In the rivalry between the Dutch and English the East India Company's factories were secure within the Mogul dominions. But when England and Holland were at war the Dutch took a heavy toll of English ships in the east.

The United Company stood at the height of its prosperity in the middle of the seventeenth century when Holland had command of the Eastern seas and the prospects of the East India Company were at their lowest. But the heavy cost of their naval and military establishments was an ever-increasing drain on Dutch commercial profits. In spite of the great prosperity of their trade in Surat, Bengal and Ceylon, expenditure gradually grew greater than income, until towards the end of the eighteenth century the deficit became enormous. Speculation was rife, and private trading, against which the directors were powerless, was general.

The close of the eighteenth century saw the earlier position of Dutch and English in India reversed, for Great Britain now had

<sup>1</sup> *Court Minutes of the E I C*, 1655-1659, Ethel B. Sainsbury and Sir W. Foster (1916), Vol. V. pp iv-vii

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command of the sea; and in addition the settlements of the United Company were exposed to the attacks of the English troops. In 1824 the Dutch exchanged their holding in India for the British possessions in Sumatra, and severed their connexion with the country.

In 1620 the Danish East India Company, founded four years earlier, made a settlement at Tranquebar on the east coast. But without sufficient capital the venture was never a success. Twice at the beginning of the nineteenth century when hostilities broke out between Great Britain and Denmark, Tranquebar and the later factory at Serampur were captured and given back. In 1845 the settlements were sold to the English company.

Henri IV tried to establish an Indian trading company, and as early as 1527<sup>1</sup> a Rouen merchant ship had visited Diu. But it was not until 1664 that Colbert, with the financial backing of Louis XIV, founded the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. The company was given the trading monopoly from the Cape of Good Hope to the South Seas, and a perpetual grant of Madagascar, but the French people did not support the venture with enthusiasm.

An energetic advance agent secured a factory concession at Surat before the French fleet arrived there in 1668; and in 1673 Sher Khan Lodi, the ruler of Bijapur, gave the company the site upon which Pondicherry now stands. In 1690 Deslandes founded the settlement of Chandernagore. Pondicherry was taken by the Dutch in 1693, but the place was restored after the Treaty of Ryswick four years later.

The creator of Pondicherry, François Martin, till the day of his death at the end of 1706 made tremendous efforts to develop French trade and strengthen the position of the settlements. But the outbreak of war in Europe in 1701 meant commercial disaster to the Company.

The challenge to the English East India Company made by Dupleix in the eighteenth century was not a simple bid for the markets of India but a struggle for political supremacy.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. V p. 61, quoting the Portuguese Joao de Barros

Hostility to Spain made the venture popular, but the East India Company came into existence because the Dutch merchants controlling the European market raised the price of pepper to an exorbitant figure. To counter this "The merchants of London . . . joined together and made a stock of seventy-two thousand pounds to be employed in ships and merchandises, for the discovery of a trade in the East India to bring into the realm spices and other commodities," and the first step was taken along the road which led to the Indian Empire under the British Sovereign and Parliament.

On the 31st December 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted the original charter conferring on the company fifteen years' monopoly of English commerce from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan. James I, nine years later, made the period indefinite though subject to revocation at three years' notice.

Private enterprise had begun, after the return from India of Ralph Fitch, with the voyage of James Lancaster to the Nicobars (1591-93). The first two voyages of the chartered company (1601-03 and 1604-06) were made to Sumatra, Bantam in Java and the Moluccas. But the ships of the third expedition were sent to India, and anchored at the mouth of the Tapti below the port of Surat on 24th August 1608. William Hawkins, a merchant who spoke Turkish, went up-country and was well received by Jahangir at Agra, but the Portuguese persuaded the Emperor to refuse permission for the English to trade in Gujarat. The resolute action of Sir Henry Middleton, who reached India in 1611 and held the Red Sea traffic from Surat and Diu to ransom, had, however, so great an effect that early in 1613 a permanent factory was established at Surat; and an English merchant was sent to Agra with presents, to watch over the company's interests at court.

In March 1615 the first East Indiaman sailed back to England with a cargo of indigo and cotton goods, and English trade with India had begun. As the company found difficulty in procuring suitable ships they established a dockyard of their own at Deptford,

and their first vessel, *The Trade's Increase*, was described as "the goodliest and greatest ship ever framed in the kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

To strengthen the hands of the East India Company Sir Thomas Roe was sent to India in 1615. The first Englishman known to have visited the country was Father Thomas Stephens, S.J., of Winchester and New College.<sup>2</sup> He went to Goa in 1579, became Rector of the Jesuit College at Salsette and assisted Fitch and his companion merchant travellers, who were arrested as spies by the Portuguese about five years later. John Mildenhall, when he tried to obtain trading concessions from Akbar in 1603, was the first Englishman to see the Great Mogul. But Sir Thomas Roe with his credentials from King James was the first English ambassador to the Mogul Emperor.

Roe failed to conclude a commercial treaty with Jahangir, but during his three years' residence at the court he greatly increased English prestige by his character and his ability. He found "the factoryes at Surat . . . and elsewhere . . . in the Mogores countrye in a desperate case: prebations out against them to prohibite them of all trade and to depart the land."<sup>3</sup> But when he returned to England in 1619 the agencies at Surat, Agra, Ahmadabad and Broach were on a satisfactory footing. His attitude towards the power of Portugal in India can be seen in his letter to the Viceroy of Goa, protesting against highhanded interference with English merchants which ends, "Your frend or enemye at your owne choyce. D. Tho. Roe, Ambassador of the Majestie of England."<sup>4</sup>

As early as 1611 a factory had been built at Masulipatam in Golconda, and this was superseded in 1641 by a fortified post near Madraspatam, which became the company's headquarters on the Coromandel coast. It was named Fort St. George, and the chief factor in charge was called the president. From this title the name presidency

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 80, and *European Travellers in India*, pp. 105-107, 119.

<sup>3</sup> Extract from Court Minutes of the East India Company, 6th October 1619.

<sup>4</sup> Under date 20th October 1615, *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 57, 58.

came to be given to the three provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay.

The president at Fort St. George looked after the growing trade of cheap piece goods from the Hindu state of the Carnatic, the remains of Vijayanagar, and when Mir Jumla, then commanding the Golconda army, took the surrounding district in 1647 the company remained on good terms with the conquerors.

Friendly relations had already been established with the Portuguese by the convention of Goa in 1635, which made it safe to send ships home singly, and allowed the coastwise traffic to be developed. The Malabar export trade in saltpetre, pepper and spices, which opened out, went some way to compensate for the tightening of the Dutch monopoly in the Far East. To balance Dutch commercial enterprise in Bengal settlements were planted about 1650 on the Hooghly, at Cossimbazar and at Patna.

Two years later the East India Company's fortunes were at their lowest ebb. Profits had from the beginning been steadily drained by the extensive and demoralizing private trading both in the country and by export by the company's servants to augment their low salaries, a form of illicit compensation which went on until 1787.<sup>1</sup> But a more serious matter was the violation of the company's trade monopoly by the Courteen Association of 1637, which built factories on the Malabar coast and after the demise of that short-lived venture by the flotation of Lord Fairfax's Company in 1649. With civil war in England the protection of the Royal Charter was gone.

The situation in India became still more critical when war broke out between England and Holland, for the Dutch fleet commanded the Eastern seas. The company had to abandon Bantam, factories in Bengal were shut down and the settlements on the Coromandel coast were reduced to Fort St. George and Masulipatam. The company's uncertain status, added to the trade depression exist-

<sup>1</sup> In 1657 the salary of the Chief Agent at Hooghly (Bengal headquarters) was £100 a year, and the pay of the Fourth and Fifth Agents was £20 (*Factory Records*, 1655-1660, pp. 188, 189). Clive joined at Madras in 1744 as a writer on a salary of £5 a year paid quarterly (*Life of Lord Clive*, Sir G. Forrest, Edn. 1918, Vol. I. p. 20).



ing in England, made it impossible to raise fresh capital for trade development by the customary terminable loans; and commercial activities had to be still further restricted by withdrawing from Agra and other inland stations. At the same time the position was aggravated by the arrival of numerous private merchant ships from England which caused ruinous competition.

The prospect appeared so hopeless that in February 1657 the East India Company announced their intention to dispose of all their rights and withdraw from the trade. The Protector, who had been considering the idea of the "regulated system" of independent trade followed in the Levant, quickly made his decision and gave the company, in October, a new charter on the lines of those of Elizabeth and James I. This definition of the company's rights made it easy to raise the money required, this time in permanent stock. Nearly £740,000 were subscribed, although only half was called up.<sup>1</sup>

King Charles II granted a fresh charter in 1661, by which the company were empowered to seize and deport interlopers, to wage war and make peace with non-Christian princes, and to appoint governors who, with their councils, were to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction over their settlements. Madras had ceased to have a president when the staff was reduced during the crisis, and the agent at Fort St. George was accordingly appointed governor in 1666 over the factories which re-appeared along the Coromandel coast. On 27th March 1668, Bombay, a part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, was transferred by King Charles to the company and the Surat president was made Governor of Bombay island.

For nearly twenty years Surat remained the commercial centre and the seat of the presidency. But its position was insecure, and the Maratha chief Sivaji sacked the place in 1664, and again six years later. Gerald Aungier, who had become governor in 1669, saw the possibilities of Bombay and by his measures set her on the road to prosperity. He established law courts, settled the local revenue, and gave every inducement to merchants and craftsmen to settle on the island. A suitable

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. V. p. 95.

currency was introduced.<sup>1</sup> The instructions to establish the Bombay Mint under local arrangements are contained in a letter to the "Generall and Council" from their "loveing Friends" the Governor and Directors of the Company in London, who observed that "it will be a pittiful Regency where such a principall part of Sovereigne Power is not exercised."<sup>2</sup>

Up to this time the English merchants had carried on their trade in India without engaging in war. Any fighting had been at sea, with the Portuguese and with the Dutch; and their military efforts had been confined to fortifying their settlements, a precaution which the home authorities had strongly disliked on the score of expense. But the war both by land and sea which was being waged between the Marathas and the Mogul forces all round Bombay made it clear in the words used by Aungier to the Directors in England a few months before his death in 1677, that "the trade could only be carried on sword in hand."

Four years later Sir Josia Child became the ruling spirit in the directorate at home, and the decision was taken to follow the Dutch example and build up on the Indian coast a military power which could defend itself from any aggressor. Bombay and Madras were to be strongly fortified, and adequate naval and military forces were to be raised to support the policy. To pay for these provisions for security rents, customs dues and municipal taxation were to be increased. The aims of the company were defined<sup>3</sup> as being "to establish such a politie of civill and military power, and create and secure such a large, well-grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come."

Sir Josia's policy was vigorously supported in India by his namesake, John Child, who became President and Governor in 1682. Aungier had recognized that, in the troubled state of the country, commercial enterprise needed military power to back it. But Sir Josia in London and John Child in India resolved to take

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. India*, Vol. V. pp. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from letter dated 6th January 1687-88 (India Office MSS Records).

<sup>3</sup> General letter to Fort St. George dated 12 December 1687, *Despatches from England* (Government Press, Madras, 1929), p. 100.

a strong line with the Mogul government over the levying of dues on the company's trade, a cause of persistent friction in Bengal, without the necessary means to support their policy.

The East India Company had at first only enrolled European guards, who were quite undisciplined, and poorly armed Indian watchmen to safeguard their factories and add to the dignity of the local officials; and when the factories were fortified, gunners were supplied from the company's ships to man the batteries. But after the transfer of Bombay by Charles II, military service under the company was offered to the garrison of king's troops, who almost all volunteered. This nucleus of the future Bombay army consisted of 2 artillerymen with 21 guns, 5 officers, 139 other ranks and 54 "Topasses," who were soldiers of mixed descent from Goa. In 1683 two companies of Rajputs, a total of 200 men armed with their own weapons and under their own officers, were enlisted at Bombay. This was the beginning of the Indian army, and these were the land forces at the disposal of the Governor. In Bengal there were 30 European soldiers under an ensign.<sup>1</sup>

The first result of the new policy was, however, domestic. The garrison of Bombay, under its commander, Captain Keigwin's Rebellion. Keigwin, came out in revolt in 1683 against the methods used to raise revenue and cut down expenditure; and Keigwin governed Bombay in the king's name for a year before he surrendered on terms. Three years later Bombay took the place of Surat as the headquarters of the western presidency.

President Child was appointed Captain-General, Admiral, Commander-in-Chief and Director of all mercantile affairs in 1687, and in these several capacities he rapidly embroiled himself with Aurangzeb. The seizure of some Mogul ships brought about a declaration of war. The English factors at Surat were imprisoned; Sir John Child captured a number of valuable Mogul merchant ships; Bombay was besieged by the Emperor's forces; and in 1690 the war ended in the company paying a heavy indemnity. Child died during the peace negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Army in India and its Evolution*, Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1924, pp. 2-6.

The difficulties with the Mogul government obliged the factories in Bengal to shut down, and, during the hostilities which followed, the post on the Hooghly selected by the company's agent, Job Charnock, was in its turn abandoned. Charnock returned after peace was made and built a fortified factory in 1698 on the sites of the villages of Sutanati, Calcutta and Govindpur which he was allowed to rent. The factory was named after William of Orange, and became, in 1700, the headquarters of Sir Charles Eyre, the first President and Governor of Fort William in Bengal.

*Foundation of Calcutta.*

The close of the century was a time of considerable anxiety for the East India Company. English pirates had become a scourge in the Arabian Sea, and, by capturing Indian vessels, caused complications with the Mogul government. While the appearance of the "English Company Trading to the East Indies" in 1698 with a duplicate trade monopoly from William III, and three discharged servants of the old company as its presidents, raised a storm of bitter disputes and threatened the original enterprise with extinction.

*The "Old and New" Companies.*

But the East India Company was equal to the occasion. The "New Company" with its special ambassador, Sir William Norris, its factors and its fleet soon found it had to raise a further loan, and the "Old Company" promptly secured a strong position by subscribing £315,000 in the name of its treasurer. After further manœuvres the "New Company" saw the wisdom of amalgamation, and a provisional agreement was reached in 1702, which at least ended the undignified quarrels in India. In 1709 Lord Godolphin's award brought complete union in the form of a chartered joint-stock company under an Act of Parliament.

With its foundations set firmly in England and its trading centres established under their presidents at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, the history of the East India Company has been carried up to the eighteenth century. But before returning to events in Mogul India there is one feature to which reference must be made—the beginnings of British justice in the country.

*The Judiciary*

## THE EUROPEAN TRADING COMPANIES

"Equal and impartial justice is one of the foundations on which British rule in India rests; it brought new ideals and prospects of peace, contentment and good government in a country where the administration of justice had hitherto been impeded by gross tyranny and corruption; and it affects the life and well-being of every villager and townsman in India."<sup>1</sup>

The charter of 1661 had empowered the Governor and Council of each factory to "judge all persons . . . under them, in all causes, whether civil or criminal, according to the laws of this kingdom and to execute judgement accordingly." From this limited jurisdiction the expansion of British justice developed. In 1672 a Court of Judicature was set up in Bombay where English law was first administered to Indians. By the religious freedom it allowed and by the reservation of capital punishment for murder only, the company's law of this Court compared favourably with the severity of the law then existing in England. The English penal code was, however, forced upon Calcutta by the Supreme Court set up in 1774. One of the most interesting features of Aungier's judicial reforms was the introduction of trial by jury in both civil and criminal cases. When any party to a dispute was not English, six of the twelve jurors had to be non-English.

*Zamindari* (landholder's) Courts had been presided over by English magistrates in Madras, in the position of Town Governor, since about 1654 to try Indian petty cases, inflicting punishments of whipping, fines, pillory and imprisonment; and almost similar Courts were held in Calcutta. Their jurisdiction was not derived from royal charter or commission as in the case of Bombay. Unlike Bombay, Madras and Calcutta had at that time no sovereign rights. These were then vested in Indian potentates, and judicial powers over the Indian inhabitants who were their subjects were derived from the suzerains.<sup>2</sup>

It must be noted, in the procedure of these early Courts, that

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Fawcett, formerly Judge of the Bombay High Court. *The First Century of British Justice in India* (Oxford), 1914, from which this of the Courts is taken.

<sup>2</sup> Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 208

Indians were practically excluded from any share in the work of the Bench. Judicial powers were exercised by European Judges, or Justices who were servants of the Company, or at least dependent on its pleasure for their stay in India. The only exceptions were the appointment of Bombay merchants to the local Court of Judicature in 1718-28, to represent the four chief communities, and similar arrangements were made earlier in Madras.<sup>1</sup>

The charter of 1726<sup>2</sup> marks another forward step in the administration of justice according to the principles and practices of the English Courts of Law, which were to lead to the establishment of the improved Courts of the nineteenth century. Civil Courts, known as Mayor's Courts, and Criminal Courts of Sessions were substituted for the Company's Courts then existing, and these new Courts derived their authority from the king. The President and Council heard appeals from decisions in the Mayor's Court, subject to a right of appeal to the king in Council when the value of the disputed property exceeded Rs.3000. The first appeal from India to the Privy Council was made from Madras in 1731.<sup>3</sup>

The charter of 1753 expressly excepted from the jurisdiction of the Mayor's Court all cases between Indians alone, unless both parties preferred that the action should be so settled. Purely Indian litigation, however, continued to form the bulk of the work of this Court.

By these two charters the only share in the administration of justice open to Indians was as jurors in the Sessions Court, but as this involved taking the same oath as jurors in England, all except Indian Christians were debarred. Sir Charles Fawcett observes: "There was of course a reason for this exclusion. In English settlements that were merely mercantile and liable to attack from hostile neighbours, such a policy was almost inevitable. It was not till the securer days of the nineteenth century that an effective start was made in associating Indians as judicial officers in the administra-

<sup>1</sup> Fawcett, *op. cit.* p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> See *Government of India*, Sir Courtenay Ilbert (2nd Edn.), pp. 32, 33, for details and legal implication of the Charters of 1726 and 1753.

<sup>3</sup> Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 218, footnote.

## THE EUROPEAN TRADING COMPANIES

tion of justice, with a successful development in the highest, as well as the lower, Courts that has made the British Courts in India one of the strongest ties between that country and Great Britain."

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1527. French ship at Diu.
- 1591. Lancaster sailed from England to the Nicobars.
- 1595. Houtman's first voyage.
- 1600. Charter of the London East India Company.
- 1602. Formation of the Dutch United Company.
- 1605. Death of Akbar; Accession of Jahangir.
- 1605. Dutch factories set up at Masulipatam and Nizampatam.
- 1613. English factory at Surat permanently established.
- 1615-1619. Roe at the Mogul Court.
- 1619. Anglo-Dutch Treaty.
- 1620. Danish factory at Tranquebar.
- 1623. The Amboyna incident.
- 1629. Death of Jahangir; Accession of Shah Jahan.
- 1634. English trade concession in Bengal.
- 1639. Fort St. George founded.
- c. 1651. English factory founded at Hooghly.
- 1653. Dutch factories established in Bengal.
- 1658. Enthronement of Aurangzeb.
- 1661. Charles II's Charter to East India Company.
- 1663. Dutch conquest of Portuguese settlements on Malabar coast.
- 1668. Bombay transferred to the East India Company.
- 1668. French fleet at Surat.
- 1673. Pondicherry founded by the French.
- 1688-1690. English war with Mogul Empire.
- 1690. Calcutta founded by Charnock.
- 1693. Dutch took Pondicherry (restored by treaty of Ryswick, 1697).
- 1700. Sir Charles Eyre first Governor of Fort William.
- 1702. Agreement between the rival English East India Companies.
- 1707. Death of Aurangzeb.

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## CHAPTER X

### Mogul India after Akbar

PRINCE SALIM, the only surviving son of the Emperor Akbar, was in his thirty-sixth year when he came to the throne as Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir Padshah Ghazi on the 17th October 1605, and crowned himself on the 24th, after a week of mourning.

In the course of half a century a great empire had taken the place of a number of independent states, and Akbar's descendants eventually conquered India as far south as the Cauvery river. But the test of their power was their ability to maintain their authority over a vast country through which communications were bad and whose outlying provinces had the temptation to throw off their allegiance. There was not, however, except among the Rajput chiefs, a strong hereditary aristocracy, as there had been in Europe, to challenge the power of an absolute monarch. The system of escheat to the Emperor made that impossible, and each new and impoverished generation had to establish its position afresh. On the other hand, the difference in fighting value between the government forces and an armed populace in revolt was not then overwhelming.

Akbar had won the goodwill of the people of India, with their contrasting principles of Hindu caste and Moslem democracy, by religious toleration. But that policy was reversed with increasing emphasis by his successors, and when to the burden of the excessive taxation of Shah Jahan there were added the fanatical persecutions of Aurangzeb, Mogul supremacy came to an end.

Jahangir's first act after his accession was to promulgate a series of reforms, of which the most important was the abolition of transit and customs duties. These edicts were at least a manifestation of

good intentions, however much they were nullified by government officials.

The new Emperor, when his father was dying, had frustrated the intrigues to put his own son Khusru on the throne by engaging to uphold Islam and not to punish those who had plotted against him, and he kept both these promises. But within six months Khusru, evading his arrest in Agra fort, escaped to the Punjab and raised a rebellion. With Hussain Beg and Abdul Aziz as his chief adherents, about 650 retainers and an army of peasants and free lances, Khusru marched upon Lahore, obtaining from the Sikh Guru Arjun a sum of money and his blessing, "not because he was a prince, but as he was needy and unfriended."

Dilawar Khan, governor of the province, rapidly put the city into a state of defence and held it with a small garrison until Khusru's forces were dispersed by the imperial troops. The leaders of the ill-starred rising were captured and brought before Jahangir. Khusru was partially blinded and sentenced to imprisonment for life. The fate of Hussain Beg and Abdul Aziz, and the wretched prisoners who were taken has been recorded by the Emperor himself.

"I ordered these two villains to be enclosed in the skins of a cow and an ass and to be placed on asses . . . and to be paraded round the city. As the skin of a cow dries quicker than the skin of an ass Hussain Beg only lived to the fourth watch (for twelve hours) and then died. Abdul Aziz, who was in the ass's skin and had moisture conveyed to him, survived for twenty-four hours and was then released. To strengthen and confirm our rule I directed that a dense row of stakes should be set up from the garden to the city and that the rebels . . . should be impaled thereon and thus receive their deserts in this most excruciating punishment." Jahangir then rode in state through the lines of his victims followed by Khusru, who was invited to accept the homage of his subjects.

An even more distinguished victim of the rebellion was Arjun, the Fifth Guru, and the compiler of the *Adi Granth*, the earlier of the Sikh sacred scriptures. Jahangir fined him heavily for helping the rebels and, on his refusal to pay, tortured him to death.

## MOGUL INDIA AFTER AKBAR

In 1611 Jahangir married Mehirunnisa, the widow of a Bengal fief-holder who had been killed four years earlier while resisting arrest on suspicion of treason. *Nur Jahan.* Jahangir and Nur Jahan—Light of the World—admirably suited each other, and the weak and self-indulgent Emperor was content to allow his strong-minded consort to gain complete influence over him.

Nur Jahan was thirty-four at the time of her second marriage, but she kept her remarkable beauty for many years; and to her personal charm were added a great charity, cultured intelligence and shrewd common sense. As the leader of society, her taste influenced the fashions for a century after her death. Her vitality found an outlet in riding and hunting with her husband, and her ambition brought her, in time, to the position of a reigning sovereign. With her name on the coinage and her signature added to Jahangir's on the imperial decrees, Nur Jahan emerged from the *purdah* and issued her orders to the nobles as she sat on the balcony of her palace. Jahangir, as his *Memoirs* record, was as proud of her prowess when tiger-shooting with her matchlock as he was of her wisdom in solving the difficulties of State affairs. The Emperor was a prey to the family failings of drink and drugs, but Nur Jahan was able eventually to moderate these habits which, outside the Mogul court circle, were not common, for Indian public opinion has always set its face against intemperance.

Early in the reign unrest had to be suppressed in Bengal. An unfortunate incursion into Tibet was made in 1612, and a year later came the successful campaign against the Portuguese. Hostilities with Udaipur (Mewar), which had been carried on intermittently for half a century, ended in 1614, when Rana Amar Singh capitulated to the Mogul army under Prince Khurram. Following Akbar's Rajput policy Jahangir, in making Udaipur a tributary state, granted most generous terms, and went so far as to erect statues of the Rana and his son below the audience window of the imperial palace at Agra.

In the Deccan the war with Ahmadnagar was prolonged through-

out the reign by the genius of the Abyssinian eunuch Malik Ambar, minister and commander-in-chief, and while he lived the state kept its independence. He was a master of guerilla tactics, and although Prince Khurram took the capital in 1616 and was awarded the title of Shah Jahan, the war went on without decisive result; and Malik Ambar died in 1626, having, in the words of the *Iqbal-nama*, "maintained his exalted position and closed his career in honour."

But in 1616 the internal state of the country was more critical than the issue of any of Jahangir's foreign campaigns. The general unrest and the court intrigues over the rival heirs—Khusru the captive hero of the people and choice of the older nobility, and Khurram the favourite of the Queen's party—threatened the Emperor with assassination and the country with civil war. Sir Thomas Roe felt it necessary to warn the East India Company to keep their agents collected in a few places, not to extend their business up country and to avoid politics.<sup>1</sup> But the Queen's party extinguished the popular hopes by transferring Khusru from the guardianship of Ani Rai Singh Dalan to his enemies; and the unfortunate prince died in the custody of Khurram, now Shah Jahan, in 1621,<sup>2</sup> when Jahangir was lying seriously ill. The official announcement made at the beginning of 1622, that Khusru had died of colic, is contrary to the popular belief at the time that the prince was murdered by order of his brother. It is also against the weight of the evidence for and against cited in the *History of Jahangir*.<sup>3</sup>

A year earlier Jahangir had taken the Hindu stronghold of Kangra after a siege of fourteen months. On a subsequent visit he outraged the religious feelings of the inhabitants by ordering a bullock to be slaughtered and a mosque erected within the fort, which Professor Beni Prasad characterizes<sup>4</sup> as one of the few intolerant acts of his reign.

<sup>1</sup> *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 246-247, under date 16th October 1616.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Jahangir*, p. 336 and footnote. *Oxford History of India* has 1622, pp. 384, 385, but Professor Prasad gives reasons for his statement.

<sup>3</sup> *The Oxford History and Mughal Rule in India* both state that Khusru was murdered.

<sup>4</sup> *History of Jahangir*, p. 318.

In 1622 Kandahar was taken by the Persians, and Shah Jahan was given command of the army to be sent to recover the city. Prince Parviz, a drunken nonentity, was now his only rival to the throne, but Shah Jahan felt that absence from the court, when his father might die at any moment, was too great a risk to his own prospects. He refused to obey the Emperor's orders, and by breaking into open rebellion justified Nur Jahan's suspicions of his loyalty, and her conviction that he had become a danger to the State.

Shah Jahan was joined by Abdurrahim, the Khan Khanan, an old man of seventy who had been loaded with honours by Jahangir. The rebel army marched on Agra and was met by the imperial troops, nominally commanded by Prince Parviz and actually led by Mahabat Khan. Shah Jahan was badly beaten at Bilochpur on 29th March 1623, and retreating through Malwa and the Deccan reached Bengal, where he reorganized his forces and gained some temporary success. But at Kampat, in 1624, Mahabat Khan again defeated him and Shah Jahan escaped to the Deccan to take refuge with his father's enemies.

The Khan Khanan had surrendered after Bilochpur and the old minister was kindly treated by the Emperor. But it was more than a year before Shah Jahan wrote to Jahangir imploring forgiveness. The answer came from Nur Jahan stating the conditions on which his submission would be accepted; two strongholds which he held must be surrendered and his sons Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb sent to the imperial court. The terms were accepted, but Shah Jahan remained in the south until his father's death.

In under four years the situation of 1622 had entirely changed. Shah Jahan was no longer a menace, but Mahabat Khan, the victorious general and the most powerful man in the Empire, was now a source of danger as he had the drink-sodden Parviz, a prospective heir to the throne, under his influence. The Queen realized the threat to her power and, with the help of her brother Asaf Khan, took steps to avert it. She succeeded in separating Parviz from Mahabat Khan, and then found a pretext to order the general's recall to court.

*Mahabat Khan's Plot.*

Mahabat Khan, faced with ruin on a charge of wholesale embezzlement, resolved by a bold stroke to get control of the Emperor and end once for all the influence of Nur Jahan. With about five thousand Rajput horse he marched up country and surprised the imperial camp, then on the move from Kashmir to Kabul. Jahangir was made a prisoner and taken in custody to Kabul, but Nur Jahan evaded capture and succeeded in arranging the Emperor's escape to Rohtas, where imperial troops had been collected. Mahabat's scheme had failed and, making a virtue of necessity, he submitted. Ordered to proceed to Sind, in pursuit of Shah Jahan, whom rumour had credited with renewed disloyalty, Mahabat Khan promptly made his peace with the prince, whose position was greatly strengthened by the death of Parviz in October 1626.

While returning from his annual visit to Kashmir in 1627, Jahangir, worn out with his excesses and suffering severely from asthma, was taken fatally ill and died on the 28th October at Chingiz Hatli in the foothills. He was buried at Shahdara, close to Lahore.

*Death of  
Jahangir.*

Jahangir possessed neither the complex character nor the outstanding intellect of his father, but he was far from incompetent. He lacked Akbar's insatiable spirit of inquiry, and religion did not vitally interest him. His devotion to Islam was outwardly orthodox, but it was largely a matter of secular policy. Like Akbar he enjoyed listening to debates between the Jesuit fathers and the *mullahs*, and although he surrounded himself with a gallery of pictures of the saints of the Catholic Church, this was in part due to his love of art, while his patronage of the Jesuit mission suited his foreign policy. Hinduism made no appeal to him and he ignored the teachings of the reformed sects, Moslem and Hindu, beyond persecuting popular preachers and fanatics when he believed them to be a danger to the State. He never instituted systematic religious persecution, and even the cases of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind who claimed to be the Mahdi, and the Svetambara Jains of Gujarat with their prophecy of the impending fall of the Empire, had at least some political pretext.

Kindly in his family life, Jahangir's temperament as a ruler was

fairly described by the Reverend Edward Terry, chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe, as "composed of extremes; for sometimes he was barbarously cruel and at other times he would seem to be exceedingly fair and gentle."

Jahangir took a keen and critical interest in the school of art founded by his father, and especially encouraged *His Culture.* miniature painting. The influence of Hindu tradition became still more pronounced, and during his reign Mogul painting was at its best.

As may be seen from his *Memoirs*, Jahangir shared Babur's enthusiasm for gardening, and delighted in planning wonderful pleasantries with their massed beds of tulips and every kind of rose, vistas of marble pavilions, waterfalls and trees, a characteristic of the dynasty which E. B. Havell has described as the greatest contribution of the Moguls to Indian art.

Although Jahangir's *Memoirs*, which cover eighteen years of his reign, have not the fascination of Babur's autobiography, they are a remarkably candid revelation of his character. Henry Beveridge has summed up the royal author as one who would have been a better and a happier man had he been head of a natural-history museum.<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor's inclination was to keep on friendly terms with Persia, but Kandahar was a perpetual source of *Foreign Policy.* contention, and after diplomatic negotiations were broken off it was lost to the Empire by the Persian invasion of 1622. Jahangir brought Udaipur, the last of the independent Rajput States, under his suzerainty, but his attempts to establish Mogul supremacy throughout the Deccan were unsuccessful.

The most important features of Jahangir's foreign policy were his relations with the European powers. At the beginning of his reign Portuguese supremacy in eastern waters was already on the wane, but their influence at the court was strong enough to prevent the earliest English merchants from obtaining trade concessions within the Empire. The situation at Agra changed in 1613, when the Portuguese, with insensate folly, plundered four imperial ships in which the Dowager Empress had a large interest. Jahangir expelled nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Jahangir*, Preface to Vol. II.

all the Portuguese from the Empire, interdicted Christianity and besieged Daman, while the Governor of Surat made an alliance with the English, who engaged and defeated the Portuguese Viceroy's fleet. The Portuguese then came to terms, and the treaty remained unbroken for the rest of Jahangir's reign.

The mischief, however, was done. English prestige rose as Portuguese influence declined, and the prospects of English traders were still further improved by the arrival of Sir Thomas Roe at the imperial court. Jahangir had no direct dealings with the Dutch United Company.

The government of the Mogul Empire has been described <sup>1</sup> as a union of despotism with bureaucracy. Unlike Akbar, *Administration.* Jahangir would never descend to details, and the local officials had in practice absolute powers over those with whom they came directly in contact, a successful appeal against oppression being extremely rare. The rule of Jahangir under the influence of Nur Jahan and her family council fell short of the government of Akbar, but for many years to come a sufficient number of foreign officials of the right stamp were available to save the administration from hopeless inefficiency. Jahangir's reign, however, marks the beginning of the decline in the general character of the higher (and alien) officials, in the service of the ruler who, notwithstanding his father's national aspirations and policy, was described by Bernier as "The Great Mogul, a foreigner in Hindustan."

There was in Mogul India no code of law other than the canon law of Islam, which was recognized in theory; but outside his interpretation of religious obligations the Emperor was free to act as he pleased. Jahangir had a genuine desire to do justice without favouring the rich, but he was capricious and violent in temper and the deliberation which had been a feature of the infliction of punishment by Akbar was replaced by speedy trials and quick executions. Until his health broke down, however, Jahangir undoubtedly tried to protect his subjects from official oppression, for the local authorities were notoriously corrupt, and popular opinion of the *kazis* (judges)

<sup>1</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 234.



has been crystallized in the saying: "When the *kazi's* bitch died, the whole town was at the funeral; when the *kazi* himself died, not a soul followed his coffin."<sup>1</sup>

Jahangir reverted to the *jagir* system of payment of officials, which Akbar had disliked as it gave the holders too much power and independence. But in general the principles of administration which Akbar had followed were observed by his son.

In a conversation with Sir Thomas Roe,<sup>2</sup> Mir Jamal-ud-din Hussain "Viceroy of Patan" in Bengal gave some illuminating details as to the pay and allowances of a high official in the Mogul government. Jamal-ud-din held the rank of Five Thousand horse, but he was allowed to maintain 1500 only (at an annual cost of 200 rupees a head) while drawing the pay of the total number, a net yearly gain of 700,000 rupees. He paid into the Treasury 1,100,000 rupees<sup>3</sup> annually for his province, it being understood that he could retain any surplus he was able to raise over and above the "rent." The Viceroy added that some governors had twice his income and more than twenty drew an equal amount. It may be mentioned that the pay which Sir Thomas received as ambassador at the Mogul court was £600 a year, equivalent, at the rate of exchange of the day, to just under 5540 rupees.

Francisco Pelsaert, chief of the Dutch factory at Agra, a highly competent observer who stayed seven years in the country, shows us the other side of the picture. In his report<sup>4</sup> written in 1626 he contrasts the luxurious life of the nobles with the "stark want and utter subjection of the common people."

The French merchant Tavernier who made five visits to India and saw a great deal of the country between 1641 and 1667, and the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Sir T. Roe's *Embassy*, pp. 209-211. The ambassador records the value of the rupee as 2s. 2d.

<sup>3</sup> In referring to sums in Indian currency the English method of notation is used in this book. But the general and official method would be to write "Rs. 11 lakhs" and Rs. 700,000 (i.e. 7 lakhs of rupees). A lakh is 100,000 and a crore 10,000,000.

<sup>4</sup> *Jahangir's India* (The Remonstrance of F. Pelsaert), tr. by W. H. Moreland

doctor François Bernier who was for twelve years at Aurangzeb's court, give accounts of the condition of the working classes. Tavernier<sup>1</sup> says of the peasants: "They are reduced to great poverty because if the governors become aware that they possess any property they seize it by right or by force. You may see in India whole provinces like deserts from whence the peasants have fled on account of the oppression of the governors." While Bernier wrote of the artisan in the city: "He can never become rich, and he feels it no trifling matter if he have the means of satisfying the cravings of hunger and covering his body with the coarsest garment. If money be gained it does not in any measure go into his pocket, but only serves to increase the wealth of the merchant."

Some of the Indian traders made large fortunes, and Virji Vora the merchant-prince of Surat who controlled a number of syndicates for more than half the seventeenth century, was reputed to be the richest merchant in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Shah Jahan did not ascend the throne without opposition. His younger and only surviving brother Shahryar had married Nur Jahan's daughter by her first husband, and the Empress supported his claim. But Shah Jahan's father-in-law Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, made short work of a claimant who had the misfortune to be slow-witted, irresolute and unpopular, and Shahryar was blinded and in prison before Shah Jahan came up from the Deccan. Asaf Khan took the additional precaution of creating a stop-gap Emperor, Dawar Baksh, son of the dead Prince Khusru.

Before he started for the north Shah Jahan sent an express message to Asaf Khan in which he said "it would be well if Dawar Baksh the son, and Shahryar the useless brother of Khusru and the sons of Prince Daniyal were all sent out of the world." The almost

<sup>1</sup> Oaten deals briefly with the accounts of these two Frenchmen in *European Travellers in India*, Chs. XI. and XII. Full details are to be found in *Travels in India*, J. P. Tavernier, ed. W. Crooke, and in *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, ed. V. A. Smith.

<sup>2</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Ch. V.

wholesale family murders which accompanied the accession of the later Mogul emperors, with disastrous effect upon the dynasty, had begun. Dawar Baksh was the only one of the proscribed collaterals who escaped death; released from prison he went to Persia, where he spent the rest of his life as a pensioner of the Shah. Nur Jahan survived her husband eighteen years, living in complete retirement on the allowance of 200,000 rupees made to her by Shah Jahan.

The new Emperor, whose crown had been made safe by a holocaust of his nearest male relatives, was proclaimed at Agra early in February 1628.

The Timurids were as a rule excellent husbands, and the redeeming feature of Shah Jahan's character was his devotion to his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Popularly known as Taj Bibi, the Lady Taj, Arjumand Bano Begam had married Prince Khurram, as he then was, in 1612, and throughout a happy married life her influence was always for good. Mumtaz Mahal died in child-birth in 1631 at the age of thirty-nine, and her sorrowing husband built in her memory at Agra a monument which has never been surpassed in beauty. Shah Jahan lived for another thirty-five years, but he did not marry again.

The Emperor's reign was to end in tragedy even more terrible than the circumstances of his accession. But under his rule of almost thirty years, frontier wars of no great importance and the revival of religious persecution were the only events which broke the peace of the country; and even repeated visitations of severe famine were not able to destroy the great outward prosperity of what is generally regarded as the golden period of Mogul dominion.<sup>1</sup>

The wealth of the Mogul emperors at the height of their power was colossal. Akbar left behind him a fortune in *Imperial Wealth.* coined money equivalent to at least two hundred million pounds today and a huge collection of gems, but this was exceeded by the treasure of his grandson. Shah Jahan was the very embodiment of oriental splendour, and his famous peacock throne of solid gold blazed with precious stones.

<sup>1</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 99.

Shah Jahan spent immense sums on architecture. The Taj Mahal alone cost 917 lakhs of rupees,<sup>1</sup> and 20,000 workmen were employed on the building, which took twenty-three years to complete. His extravagant expenditure on tombs, mosques and palaces was a crushing burden upon the country and paved the way to national bankruptcy. The standard of assessment was raised by one-half, and production ceased "to be worth while because life, to the producer, was ceasing to be worth living."<sup>2</sup>

But Shah Jahan gave India its most lovely examples of the Indo-Persian style of architecture in the tomb of Jahangir at Shahdara, the Jama Masjid at Delhi, and the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal at Agra. Rumour has for many years attributed the Taj, in part at least, to French or Italian experts. But Sir Jadunath Sarkar<sup>3</sup> gives documented reasons for the statement that it was built under the supervision of Mukarramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim, working on a wooden model. Maulvi Moin-ud-din Ahmad ascribes the conception of the design to Isa Afandi, a 'Turko-Indian.'<sup>4</sup>

The rebellions in Bundelkhand and in the south during the first two years of the reign were suppressed with little difficulty. The rising of the Bundela Rajputs in 1628 under Raja Jujhar Singh, the son of Jahangir's favourite, Bir Singh, was put down by Mahabat Khan, and the fugitive raja was killed by Gonds some years later.

The second rebellion, headed by Khan Jahan Lodi carrying out the traditional hostility of the Afghan chiefs to the Mogul dynasty,<sup>5</sup> although backed by the ruler of Ahmadnagar, was soon dealt with by the imperial general Azam Khan; and Khan Jahan and his sons died in battle. This revolt, however, became ultimately the cause of greater interference in the Deccan than had ever yet been exercised by the Mogul sovereigns of Delhi.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 363.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies in Mughal India*

<sup>4</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 310.

<sup>5</sup> V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 392.

<sup>6</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 71.

The failure of the monsoon brought about an appalling famine in Gujarat and the Deccan between 1630 and 1632, followed first by a plague of destructive vermin and then by widespread pestilence. The Dutch merchant van Twist, who afterwards became governor of Malacca, wrote an account of what he saw, a terse description of fact more heartrending than the emotional chronicle of Abdul Hamid Lahori.<sup>1</sup> Van Twist has recorded: "No grass grew. Cattle died. As the famine increased men abandoned towns and villages . . . deserted their wives and children. Women sold themselves and their children as slaves. Children deserted by their parents sold themselves. Some families took poison and so died together . . . Others threw themselves into the rivers so that they flowed full of corpses. Husbands (ate) their wives, wives their husbands, children their parents. . . . Human flesh was sold in open market. Some of the Dutchmen coming from Amadabad found some people sitting at a little fire where hands and feet were cooking; a terrible thing to see. The whole country was covered with corpses lying unburied, which caused such a stench that the whole air was filled with it. . . . This terrible divine punishment fell chiefly on the poor who had nothing in store."<sup>2</sup>

The State measures of relief consisted in the opening of public kitchens, the remission of a proportion of the taxes and grants of money. But these measures could not cope with the calamity, there was considerable delay before they were begun, and Peter Mundy<sup>3</sup> observed that "the rich and strong (were) taking perforce all to themselves." There was abundance of grain in the north but the transport difficulties due in part to the Deccan war were insuperable; and although English merchants ordered large stocks of grain from Persia shipping facilities were quite inadequate for effective supply. It was not until the end of 1631 that land and sea transport was able

<sup>1</sup> Abdul Hamid's account is quoted in *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Elliott and Dowson, Vol. VII. p. 24; in *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 73; and *Oxford History of India*, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from van Twist's pamphlet by Moreland (*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 212, 213).

<sup>3</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 214. See also *Travels of Peter Mundy, 1608-1667*. Ed. Sir R. C. Temple (Hakluyt Society), 4 vols. 1905-1924.

to meet the needs of the reduced population, though at prices still far above the normal.

Trade was dead in a depopulated land, and in December 1634 the factors at Surat wrote to London that the losses were incalculable. It was not until two years later that it became possible to report that the country had recovered from famine. There were seven other famines in different parts of the country, of varying severity, between 1632 and 1658.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison cannot fairly be drawn between the measures taken by the Mogul Government and the existing organization for famine relief. In 1530 there were no first-class roads; in 1930 nearly 42,000 miles of railway spread over the country. The effect of local shortage of food today is consequently soon spread over a wide area by importation; and modern civilization has been able to evolve a protective system which has practically put an end to famine on a large scale.

In 1632 Shah Jahan went to war with the Portuguese. Their increasing trade in Bengal was reducing the provincial revenues, but the Emperor's hostility was chiefly aroused by the Portuguese slave-trade coupled with the religious propaganda of the merchants. The Portuguese fortified settlement of Hooghly was invested by an army said to have numbered 150,000 men, and the little garrison of 300 Portuguese and 700 Indian Christians held out gallantly for three months. "The place was carried by assault at the end of September, very few of the Portuguese escaping. Four hundred prisoners were paraded before Shah Jahan in July 1633 and were given their choice between turning Muhammedans and perpetual imprisonment. A few adopted the former course and were rewarded."<sup>2</sup> The Mogul persecution of Christianity thus begun continued for about two years.

While the Christian prisoners of Hooghly were passing, as the author of the *Badshah-nama* viewed it, "from prison to hell," Shah Jahan began a violent persecution of the Hindus of Benares, and destroyed a large number of temples.

*War with the Portuguese*

*Hindu Persecution*

<sup>1</sup> See *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 206-210.

<sup>2</sup> *Dutch Dagb Register*, 1631-1634, p. 145.

## MOGUL INDIA AFTER AKBAR

From the time of Akbar until Aurangzeb destroyed the last two Sultanates of Golconda and Bijapur the Mogul Emperors pursued a forward policy in the Deccan. *Operations in the Deccan.* Shah Jahan's earliest operations were stopped by the famine and by the death of Mumtaz Mahal. But in 1635 operations were resumed with vigour. The Maratha chief Shahji had re-established the power of what had once been the kingdom of Ahmadnagar, and set up a youthful member of the Nizam Shahi dynasty as nominal ruler. Shahji was the father of Sivaji, the popular leader, "the wisdom of whose plans" in the words of James Grant Duff "raised the despised Hindus to sovereignty . . . when the hand that had framed them was low in the dust."

The Emperor sent an ultimatum to the rulers of Golconda and Bijapur demanding a recognition of his suzerainty, the payment of tribute and abstention from an alliance with Shahji and the State of Ahmadnagar. Golconda accepted the terms; but the Adil Shah was defiant and two imperial armies swept through Bijapur massacring and enslaving the inhabitants. In May 1636 Muhammad Adil Shah and Shahji made peace, and the settlement lasted for about twenty years. Aurangzeb was appointed Viceroy of the Deccan provinces, Khandesh, Berar, Telingana and Daulatabad. Daulatabad included those parts of Ahmadnagar which were not ceded to Bijapur, now a feudatory State of the Empire.

Shah Jahan by his own rebellion against his father had ruined Jahangir's prospects of regaining Kandahar. He now resolved to win back the chief commercial station on the trade route between India and Persia. By judicious bribery the imperial governor of Kabul induced the Persian, Ali Mardan Khan, to surrender Kandahar in 1638. *The North-Western Campaigns.*

Between the years 1645 and 1649 Shah Jahan waged unsuccessful war to recover the lost Timurid territories of Balkh and Badakshan. But in 1648 a large Persian army entered Afghanistan, and Kandahar was taken in February 1649. Shah Jahan made several attempts to recapture it. In May of the same year and again in 1652 Aurangzeb was sent up, on the second occasion with new siege-guns, but he

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failed to take the place; and Dara Shikoh was equally unsuccessful in 1653. Neither Shah Jahan nor his successors made any further attempt to regain it.

The loss of Kandahar was regrettable though not disastrous and the unsuccessful sieges had cost the government more than half the gross revenue of the Empire for one year,<sup>1</sup> but the loss of military prestige was considerable. The army of Akbar in spite of its usual encumbrances of an imperial court was efficient. But by the reign of Shah Jahan deterioration had already set in,<sup>2</sup> and the policy of increasing the weight of the heavy artillery did nothing to counteract it.

Aurangzeb had found the administration of the Deccan a thankless task. The country could not pay its way, which  
*Aurangzeb as Administrator.* landed him in financial difficulties, and he had to contend with the hostility of his eldest brother Dara Shikoh, who had complete influence over the Emperor. In 1644 he resigned his viceroyalty in protest against the persistent belittling of his authority and his consequent loss of prestige.<sup>3</sup>

A year later he was appointed to Gujarat. The country was infested with bandits and "the prevailing lawlessness added to the misery of the peasants and the poverty of the land by discouraging industry."<sup>4</sup> But the strong and energetic rule of Aurangzeb proved effective in establishing order and unusual security.

When the expeditionary force was sent up to Central Asia, Aurangzeb was given command, and on his return from active service in 1652 he was reappointed Viceroy of the Deccan. With the help of an exceptionally able and conscientious revenue officer, Murshid Quli Khan of Khurasan, who had been Paymaster to the Forces in Balkh, he reorganized the finances and introduced Todar Mal's system of land survey and assessment. The administration was overhauled, incompetent officials were dismissed or reduced, and agriculture was encouraged by irrigation works and loans. But at the same time Aurangzeb was betraying by his religious bigotry the

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I pp. 167, 168 and footnotes

<sup>2</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 174-180.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Aurangzeb* Vol. I pp. 76, 77.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. I p. 80.



limitations of his character, which finally blighted his fame and wrecked his Empire.<sup>1</sup>

The viceroy now turned his attention to foreign affairs, and resolved to attack the States of Bijapur and Golconda. The Shia Sultans of the Deccan were the objects of bitter hostility to the Mogul rulers, and Aurangzeb had no scruples as to the means he might employ to destroy them. He found a useful ally in Muhammad Said, known in history as Mir Jumla.<sup>2</sup>

The son of a Shia oil merchant of Isfahan, Mir Jumla had come to the Deccan in 1630 as a young man, and made a fortune in diamonds. Abdulla Qutb Shah (Kutbu-l-mulk), struck by his remarkable ability, made him chief minister of Golconda, and Mir Jumla proceeded to make himself virtual ruler of the State. Sent to subdue the hitherto unconquerable highlands of the Carnatic he handled the forces he had trained himself and stiffened with European artillerymen so effectively that he annexed a territory 300 miles long and 50 in breadth. Here he maintained his army on the proceeds of the local diamond mines and by digging up the treasure buried beneath the old Hindu temples. Qutb Shah found that he had raised up against himself a formidable and virtually independent ruler whom he had not the power to crush. To strengthen his position Mir Jumla began to intrigue against his master and so got in touch with Aurangzeb.

The would-be confederates were full of mutual suspicion but eventually Shah Jahan made Mir Jumla a Commander of Five Thousand in the Empire; and Aurangzeb declared war on Golconda. Hyderabad, one of the richest cities in India, was entered at the end of January 1656 and sacked. Aurangzeb then laid siege to the stronghold of Golconda where Qutb Shah had taken refuge. At this point Shah Jahan intervened and peace was made on the terms of an indemnity and the ceding of a district. After this campaign Shah Jahan made Mir Jumla chief minister of the Empire.

The kingdom of Bijapur, profiting by the peace of 1636, had reached the height of its power under Muhammad Adil Shah and

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-242 give a documented account of the rise of this incredibly brilliant and unscrupulous adventurer.

extended from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. But on the death of Muhammad in 1656, after a reign of thirty years, serious disturbances took place, and Aurangzeb made these the pretext for invading and plundering the country in 1657, with the assistance of Mir Jumla. Once again Shah Jahan intervened to prevent annexation by Aurangzeb. Ali 'Adil Shah II surrendered Bidar, Kalyan and Parenda and paid a heavy indemnity.

In the light of coming events one other incident of the Bijapur campaign deserves notice. The young Maratha chief Sivaji, profiting by the outbreak of war, raided the Mogul territory with his light horsemen and plundered the country almost to the gates of Ahmadnagar. But as soon as Aurangzeb organized movable columns and threatened Sivaji's capital of Poona, the Maratha chief made his submission.

Early in September 1657 Shah Jahan became so ill that he despaired of recovery and named Dara Shikoh his successor. Dara Shikoh, then forty-two years of age, was the eldest of the four sons of Mumtaz Mahal, Shuja being forty-one, Aurangzeb thirty-nine and Murad Baksh six years younger. The brothers were all viceroys with large standing armies under their command, and they had no love for each other; indeed the bitter feeling between Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb was a byword in the Empire. No one doubted that the succession to the throne would be won by civil war, possibly before the Emperor's death.

Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's trusted adviser for years, with a position only short of sovereignty in the unprecedented rank of Commander of Forty Thousand (raised to Sixty Thousand during the Emperor's illness), held every advantage Shah Jahan could bestow—save one. His experience in the field had been limited to five months before Kandahar and he had never been allowed to leave his father's side to learn the responsibilities of government and how to deal with men. He had conspicuous physical courage, but he was capricious, weak in character, and clouded with his own conceit, while a leaning towards Sufism, and a strong interest in Hinduism made him suspect in the eyes of orthodox Sunni Moslems. In his

private life he was a good father, and devoted "to his nearest and dearest friend," his wife Nadirah Banu, a grand-daughter of Akbar.<sup>1</sup>

Shuja had proved himself a capable and courageous ruler in Bengal, but his energies were sapped by self-indulgence and he was under the disadvantage of being a Shia. Murad Baksh, brave, dissolute and brainless, was Viceroy of Gujarat and the west.<sup>2</sup>

During his illness the Emperor could not show himself as usual to the public, and Dara Shikoh allowed no one near his bedside. Rumours spread throughout the country that Shah Jahan was dead; and his sons prepared to fight for the throne. Shuja and Murad both declared themselves Emperor. Aurangzeb made no open move, but he began an intrigue with Murad to whom he offered a share of the Empire. Shuja advanced on Agra with an army but was defeated at Bahadurpur near Benares, in February 1658, by the imperial troops and driven back into Bengal.

The Emperor had recovered three months previously, but Aurangzeb now began to show his hand. Early in April he crossed the Narbada, effected a junction with Murad's army in Malwa, and overwhelmed the forces sent against him by Dara Shikoh at Dharmat on the 15th April. The Rajput clansmen fought with magnificent courage, but the divided command of the imperial army, under Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar and Kasim Khan, stood no chance against the cool generalship of Aurangzeb.

Dara Shikoh now took the field to stem the tide of defeat. His father urged him to wait until Raja Jai Singh and Prince Sulaiman Shikoh returned from the campaign against Shuja, but Dara Shikoh would take no advice and marched to meet his brothers at Samugarh. The battle was fought on 29th May 1658, and in a desperate encounter Dara Shikoh was utterly defeated and his army scattered.

Aurangzeb marched on Agra and, throwing off his previous pretence of loyalty to the Emperor himself, laid siege to the fort.

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. I. pp. 294-302, Vol. II p. 207. The reference to Nadirah is from the Persian inscription written in Dara Shikoh's handwriting in an album of paintings now in the India Office Library.

<sup>2</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 86.

Shah Jahan's appeal, in which he urged upon his son "that eternal prosperity comes only from remembering God and showing kindness to men," met with the curt reply "It is your own doing;" and on 8th June the fort surrendered with its immense hoard of treasure. Exasperated by the knowledge that the old Emperor's affection remained centred on Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb made his father a close prisoner, and two days later publicly exercised imperial authority and accepted homage.

He was Emperor in all but name. Dara Shikoh's power was broken, and it only remained to end him altogether. Shuja had still to recover from his defeat, and had been sent an affectionate letter by "his true brother" giving him Bihar. Murad was in leading strings. But the junior member of the only fraternal alliance was beginning to distrust the promises made to him, and resented the absolute power which Aurangzeb was gathering into his own hands. Aurangzeb decided to deal with Murad and his growing pretensions before his brother's rapidly increasing forces became a danger.

The two brothers left Agra for Delhi at the head of their armies. While on the march Aurangzeb persuaded Murad to enter his camp and after entertaining him at dinner bound his guest and took him captive to Delhi, while Murad's army of 20,000 men entered his gaoler's service. Murad's subsequent fate is soon told. Although a prisoner his popularity made Aurangzeb uneasy, and he had his brother tried and executed in 1661 on a charge of murder.

At Delhi, Aurangzeb rested his army, reorganized the government of the provinces and, on the 21st July 1658, crowned himself Emperor under the title of Alamgir <sup>1</sup> Padshah Ghazi.

Dara Shikoh had not yet given up all hope, but with the resources and troops at his disposal he was unable to withstand the ruthless energy of Aurangzeb's pursuit. He was driven from Lahore to Multan, from Multan to Gujarat, and from Gujarat to Ajmer where, at Deori from the 12th to the 14th April 1659, he made his last stand. At last he came as a fugitive to the Bolan Pass, where his devoted wife died of dysentery. To fulfil her last request he sent Nadirah's body back to be buried in India with his remaining troopers as escort.

<sup>1</sup> Conqueror of the Universe.

Dara Shikoh went on with a few servants to seek refuge with the Afghan Malik Jiwan Khan of Dadar, whose life he had saved years before when Shah Jahan had sentenced the Khan to be trampled to death by an elephant. Jiwan Khan handed his benefactor over to his pursuers.

Dara Shikoh was brought before Aurangzeb at Delhi at the end of August 1659. There was a degrading parade through the streets amidst crowds roused to fury by the appearance of Jiwan Khan, and riots against the betrayer took place on the following day. That night Dara Shikoh was beheaded in his prison, after a violent struggle, on the grounds of heresy.

Sulaiman Shikoh, Dara Shikoh's eldest son, was captured when trying to escape over the passes into Ladak at the end of 1660. Aurangzeb received his nephew kindly, earnestly assured him that he would be treated with tenderness, and sent him to die by slow poison in Gwalior prison.

Aurangzeb, after dealing with Murad and having followed Dara Shikoh to the Indus in December 1658, was obliged to return from the Punjab. Shuja had taken his brother's promises for what they were worth and, profiting by his rival's absence, had seized Benares and advanced as far as Allahabad. Aurangzeb, coming up by forced marches, met him at Ewajah on the 3rd January 1659 and routed him. The pursuit of the defeated army was left to Mir Jumla, who had been deprived of his position as imperial minister on the outbreak of civil war, and now reappeared to become one of Aurangzeb's best generals. Shuja was chased across Bengal to the Deccan and then eastward to Arakan on the Burmese side of the Bay of Bengal. He crossed the Arakan border in May 1660 and was never heard of again.

Shah Jahan was kept in close confinement in Agra Fort, attended by his two surviving wives and his devoted daughter Jahanara until his death in January 1666, at the age of seventy-four.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This account of the civil war is based on Sarkar's *History of Aurangzeb*, Vols. I. to III.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1605. Accession of Jahangir.
- 1606. Rebellion of Prince Khusru.
- 1611. Jahangir married Nur Jahan.
- 1613. War with the Portuguese.
- 1614. Udaipur acknowledged Mogul suzerainty.
- 1615-1619. Sir Thomas Roe in India.
- 1616. Prince Khurram awarded title of Shah Jahan on capture of Ahmadnagar fortress.
- 1622. Kandahar taken by the Persians.
- 1623. Shah Jahan in rebellion defeated at Bilochpur.
- 1624. The rebellion ended by defeat at Kampat.
- 1626. Mahabat Khan's plot.
- 1627. October: death of Jahangir.
- 1628. February: accession of Shah Jahan.  
Rising of the Bundela Rajputs.
- 1629. Rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi.
- 1630-1632. Famine in Gujarat and the Deccan.
- 1632-1653. Building of the Taj Mahal.
- 1632. Hindu persecution.
- 1635-1636. Invasion of Bijapur.
- 1636-1644. First Deccan Viceroyalty of Aurangzeb.
- 1638. Kandahar surrendered to Shah Jahan.
- 1645-1649. Badakshan campaigns.
- 1649. Final loss of Kandahar.
- 1652. Second Deccan Viceroyalty of Aurangzeb.
- 1657. September: illness of Shah Jahan.
- 1658. February: beginning of the War of Succession.  
June: Shah Jahan made prisoner by Aurangzeb.  
July: Aurangzeb ascended the throne.

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## CHAPTER XI

### Aurangzeb

THE coronation of Aurangzeb in 1658 had been hurried and informal, and a year later he was enthroned with great ceremony.

Failure of the monsoon and the breakdown in the administration caused by the civil war had brought widespread distress and famine upon the country, and the Emperor on his formal accession proclaimed a number of concessions to his subjects. Eighty imposts were officially abolished throughout Hindustan, ranging from transit dues and taxes on Hindu fairs down to the taxation of goats. But, in the words of Khafi Khan,<sup>1</sup> "although his gracious and beneficent Majesty remitted these taxes and issued strict orders prohibiting their collection, the avaricious propensities of men prevailed," and except in the towns, where strict supervision was possible, the concessions were a dead letter.

The higher officials, as Bernier observed, were heavily in debt on account of the extravagance of their households of wives and servants and their stables of horses and camels; they were expected, moreover, to give the Emperor costly presents at various annual festivals. To meet these expenses they raised money in unauthorised ways, and the imperial government only interfered in the local administration when the scandal became notorious, or the people were driven into rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

But the oppression of the poor, to which Indian historians and foreign visitors allude, cannot be directly charged to the central government. "The principles of the land-revenue system were

<sup>1</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 271, 272.



thoroughly sound and were conveyed to the officials in a series of instructions which were all that could be desired." One has only to read the rules for the guidance of the collectors of revenue included in the *Ain-i-Akbari* to realize that fact<sup>1</sup>; and Aurangzeb's revenue regulations of 1668-69<sup>2</sup> emphasize a policy "to give ease to the *ryots* (cultivators), so that the signs of agriculture may increase . . . while benefiting the government," to quote from the imperial decree.

The reign of Aurangzeb, a time of almost ceaseless warfare, lasted forty-seven years, and falls into two parts. The earlier half is centred in Northern India, the second period in the south, when the Emperor was engaged in the twenty-six years of fighting which sapped the resources of the Mogul Empire. As Sir Jadunath Sarkar has said: "In the closing years of Aurangzeb's life, Hindustan merely meant a place where the much-needed money for the Deccan wars was to be raised and from which disturbances were reported with annoying frequency."<sup>3</sup>

After the civil war was over, and before the imperial armies moved to fight on the eastern and north-western frontiers, Aurangzeb received a procession of ambassadors from the Moslem world. Persia and Mecca were the greatest of these powers to send their envoys, and the Dutch sent their representative from Batavia.

"The fame of his victories had spread far and wide and he was congratulated on his accession. His policy at the beginning was to dazzle the eyes of foreign princes by . . . lavish presents to them and their envoys and thus induce the outer Moslem world to forget his treatment of his father and brothers, or at least to show courtesy to the successful man of action and master of India's untold wealth, especially when he was so free with his money."<sup>4</sup> Later in his reign he stopped this liberality but he always maintained friendly intercourse with the Moslem states.

<sup>1</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 204, 205

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 169-197.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 115, 116.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

The history of Assam as a kingdom starts with the invasion of the Ahoms, an offshoot of the Shan race, early in the thirteenth century; and they gradually conquered the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. By the end of the sixteenth century, through intermarriage with the people of Cooch Behar, the Ahoms had generally adopted Hinduism.

*Invasion of  
Assam*

Moslem invasion of Assam from the thirteenth century onwards had invariably failed. The great valley, with the Brahmaputra as its only gateway, was as isolated as Kashmir. But, unlike Kashmir, Assam was protected by masses of almost impenetrable forest. The climate was desperately unhealthy and a record rainfall flooded the country regularly every year, disabilities which, of course, still exist.<sup>1</sup>

In the disorders of the war of succession the rulers of Cooch Behar and Assam crossed the Bengal frontier and seized part of Kamrup. But when Aurangzeb's position became secure, Mir Jumla was sent up from Dacca with a strong force, well supplied with boats. Cooch Behar was occupied without opposition at the end of 1661 and the country annexed. At the beginning of 1662 Mir Jumla invaded Assam and during the next three months swept all before him, capturing stockaded positions, sinking the Assamese river flotilla, and taking a large amount of arms and ammunition at the capture of the capital Garhaon.

After March, Mir Jumla had to contend with a more formidable enemy than the Assamese. His lines of communication were broken by floods and he had the greatest difficulty in maintaining himself in the country. But Mir Jumla was a commander who not only held the confidence and affection of his men by sharing all their hardships, but "no other general of his age conducted war with so much humanity."<sup>2</sup> He permitted no ill-treatment whatsoever of the inhabitants, who consequently freely brought in supplies for the army.

<sup>1</sup> The description of the country given by Shihab-ud-din, who accompanied Mir Jumla's expedition and wrote the *Fatryeh-i-Ibrayah*, is quoted at length by Sir Edward Gait in his authoritative *History of Assam*, pp. 141-151 (2nd Edn., Calcutta, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 206.

Although fatally ill with fever and pleurisy, Mir Jumla resumed the offensive at the beginning of the cold weather, and on the 5th January 1663 peace was concluded with the Ahom King Sutyinpha. By the terms of the treaty a large indemnity and an annual tribute of elephants were exacted and territory on both banks of the Brahmaputra was ceded. Mir Jumla died on the 30th March on his way back to Dacca, and the country was lost to the Mogul Empire, mainly through the oppression of local officials, by 1681.

Mir Jumla was followed as Governor of Bengal by Aurangzeb's maternal uncle Shayista Khan. Sent in 1660 to deal with Sivaji, Shayista had entirely failed to cope with the rapid and unexpected movements of a past-master in the art of raiding, and was relieved of his command in the Deccan. When he reached Dacca he found that the Bay of Bengal and the waterways of the province as far inland as Hooghly and the provincial capital were dominated by the pirates of Chittagong, who habitually pillaged when and where they pleased.

The kings of Arakan had long taken advantage of the weakness of the Mogul Empire at sea, and built up a fleet manned by their Magh subjects and by Portuguese adventurers and half-castes. As early as 1625 the "swift galleasses of the Arrakanese" had sacked Dacca, obliged the Mogul viceroy to move his headquarters, and they had levied blackmail on Eastern Bengal for years. The Maghs kept the Muhammadans and Hindus they captured as farm and household slaves, making concubines of the women; the Portuguese sold their prisoners to Dutch, English and French merchants at the Deccan ports.<sup>1</sup>

The loss caused to the provincial revenue by the ravages of the pirates was considerable, the blow to Mogul prestige was intolerable, and Shayista Khan was given a free hand by the Emperor to stamp out the piracy. The expedition to Assam had taken a heavy toll of the Mogul fleet, such as it was, and Mir Jumla had died before he could reorganize it. Shayista Khan had to create a new navy, and one which could oppose the numerous well-armed pirate vessels. He collected every available shipwright and built nearly 300 ships

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 225.

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in little over a year in the dockyards of Dacca and the smaller ports, while he made fortified bases for the fleet.

Towards the end of December 1665 Shayista Khan began his combined operations with his fleet and army, and by the 26th January 1666 Chittagong was taken and the pirate fleet destroyed or captured. "We can easily imagine," the Governor wrote in his report to the Emperor, "how fast cultivation will increase in Bengal, now that Magh violence has been put down."<sup>1</sup>

A year later Mogul troops were fighting on the Afghan border, fifteen hundred miles from Chittagong.

*First Afghan War.*

The Pathans had settled in the valleys of the north-western highlands at the beginning of the sixteenth century; and by consistently regarding the plains and prosperous towns below them as their lawful prey, have made the history of that frontier a tale of almost continuous fighting from that day to this. Akbar's efforts to subdue the tribes ended in the disaster of 1586 and the payment of subsidies to the *maliks* (chiefs). Jahangir and Shah Jahan left the frontier province to take care of itself, but Aurangzeb decided that imperial prestige could no longer allow habitual raiding.

Early in 1667 a *lashkar*, or tribal force, of 5000 Yusufzais came down into the Hazara district and strong raiding parties appeared on the Kabul River. The Yusufzais were badly beaten at the beginning of April by the Governor of Attock, and when reinforcements arrived from Lahore and Kabul the Yusufzai country was entered and the tribesmen were taught a salutary lesson.

The Afridis were the next tribe to give trouble. In 1672 Acmal

*Second Afghan War.*

Khan, who had gained control over the clans, seized the country between Peshawar and Kabul and annihilated a Mogul army in the Khyber Pass. Muhammad Amin Khan, Governor of Kabul, and a few of his officers escaped to Peshawar with their lives, but everything else was lost.

The Mogul casualties were 10,000 killed, and 20,000 men and

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, Vol III p. 240.

women were captured and sent into slavery in Central Asia, while the booty was considerable. As inevitably happens upon the frontier after a disaster, the whole border rose, from Kandahar to Attock.

Aurangzeb ordered Mahabat Khan, who had long experience as a frontier officer, but was now nearly seventy, up from the Deccan, and as he showed small inclination to risk an engagement, large reinforcements were sent up under Shujaat Khan in November 1673. Mahabat and Shujaat were told to co-operate with Maharaja Jaswant Singh who was holding Jamrud.

History never repeats itself more closely than on the north-west frontier. The Pathan leaders had served in the imperial army and knew its organization and tactics, and they were fighting in their own country. Except for artillery—and the Mogul guns were almost immobile—there was little difference in armament. The Indian troops were unused to mountain warfare and found the intense winter cold exceedingly trying. But added to this was jealousy in the higher command.

The concentration of so large a force induced a number of the clans to send deputations into Peshawar to sue for peace. But Shujaat Khan, without waiting for the remainder to submit and ignoring Jaswant's advice, advanced into the hills upon Kabul. His camp on the Karapa kotal (saddle) was heavily attacked on a stormy night in February 1674. Shujaat Khan was killed, and next morning the Pathans came down from the heights to complete their victory. What was left of Shujaat's column was extricated only by the skilful handling and magnificent behaviour of a small body of Rajput infantry with guns which had been sent in support by Jaswant Singh.

Aurangzeb came up to the frontier after this second disaster, and with the combination of overwhelming force and the distribution of money, *jagirs* and posts in the imperial army to the *maliks*, won the submission of many of the clans.

In the meanwhile Aghar Khan, an able and experienced Turki general, had been brought up from the Deccan. He reduced the Mohmands to order, making for himself a name on the frontier which was echoed in John Nicholson nearly two hundred years later,

and at the end of a vigorous campaign defeated a strong force of Afghans at Gandamak.

In June 1675 the Moguls met with a heavy reverse in Bajaur, but Aghar Khan restored the situation. It was not, however, until Amir Khan was made governor of Afghanistan in 1678 that peace reigned, as much as it ever could reign on the frontier, and lasted during the whole of his twenty years' administration. The Mogul policy was to play one clan off against another, and to keep the Khyber route open by the payment of regular subsidies, an arrangement which still survives under what is known as the *khassadar* system.

Affairs in Afghanistan had been serious enough, but the religious policy in which the Emperor persisted, and upon which he had already embarked, was to have a decisive effect upon the fortunes of the Mogul Empire.

*Religious Policy.* Aurangzeb had entered the war of succession as the defender of orthodox Islam and ordered the execution of his unsuccessful rival and elder brother Dara Shikoh on the grounds of heresy. His attitude was perfectly sincere. He was a religious fanatic, living a simple and abstemious life with only three wives,<sup>1</sup> while he scrupulously followed every precept of the Koran. In the eleventh year of his reign he even forbade the playing of music at court, and pensioned off the musicians. His jealous orthodoxy as a Sunni estranged the Shia Moslem population; and by his sectarian intolerance he stopped the flow of Shia immigrants from Persia and Khurasan, depriving the government service of its ablest recruits. This source of supply had already been considerably diminished by Akbar's policy of "India for the Indians." Foreign stock is apt to deteriorate rapidly on Indian soil, as the Portuguese found to their cost, and the alien Mogul state vitally required the constant immigration of strong new blood from outside. Nor did Aurangzeb take steps to obtain an adequate supply of military recruits from beyond the north-western border. The Mogul army of Indian Muhammadans with its stiffening of Rajputs had lost much of its earlier efficiency when it came to meet the Maratha horse and their famous light infantry.

But it was the complete reversal of Akbar's policy of toleration

<sup>1</sup> The Koran allows four wives.

towards Hinduism which led more than anything else to the downfall of the Empire. Aurangzeb firmly believed that he was compounding with sin if he tolerated any sect outside the fold of orthodox Islam, and that his duty to enforce the faith upon all his subjects lay clear before him. In a charter to a Benares priest in the first year of his reign he significantly quoted the canon law that while "long-standing temples should not be demolished, no new temple (should be) allowed to be built."<sup>1</sup>

Had he stopped at this his Hindu subjects would probably have quietly accepted the restriction. But in 1669 he issued a general order "to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels, and to put down their religious teaching and practices,"<sup>2</sup> and the great temple at Somnath and the Vishvanath temple at Benares were pulled down during the year. In January 1670 the great shrine at Mathura, Kesav Rai's temple, built in the reign of Jahangir, whose gilded pinnacle could be seen in Agra, was levelled to the ground. A large mosque was then built on the site, and the Emperor ordered that the name of the city should be changed to Islamabad. The jewelled idols were taken to Agra and placed under the steps leading to the Nawab Begam Sahib's mosque "to be pressed under foot by the true believers."<sup>3</sup>

In order that the destruction of the Hindu temples should be thorough, *muhtasibs* (censors of morals) were appointed under an inspector-general, and their duties also included the enforcement of the Islamic code, which forbade gambling and the use of wine and drugs.

At the same time economic pressure was added to direct religious persecution. By an ordinance of 1665 the custom duty on all commodities brought in for sale was fixed at 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* in the case of Moslems and 5 per cent in the case of Hindus. Two years later the duty was abolished for Moslem traders, and retained at its old level for Hindus.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 28th February 1659. *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. pp. 319, 320.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, quoted by Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 313.

In 1671 Aurangzeb struck a blow at the large body of middle-class educated Hindus who had served from time immemorial as clerks in the revenue department by issuing a decree which, in the words of the official historian of the reign, "by one stroke of the pen . . . dismissed all the Hindu writers from his service." But it was found that the secretariats were unable to function without their Hindu head clerks and accountants, and eventually the Emperor allowed half the clerks in the revenue and accounts departments to be Hindus.<sup>1</sup>

Further and heavier restrictions were to follow, but discontent and hatred of Mogul rule was already making itself felt. The Jats of the Mathura district, infuriated by the destruction of their temple, rose in revolt, and the imperial troops, under Aurangzeb himself on one occasion, were unable entirely to suppress them.<sup>2</sup> These risings continued during the reigns of the Emperor's successors; while the epithet "Turk" passed into Jat speech as the name for an oppressor.<sup>3</sup>

The Jat risings were definite revolts of the Hindu peasantry against religious persecution, but the rebellion of the Hindu sect of Satnamis in May 1672 was started by a quarrel between some of their members and a soldier in the Narnaul district. From this beginning the disturbance spread and assumed the form of a religious war. Small bodies of troops were defeated, the garrison of Narnaul was driven out, the town was plundered and the mosques destroyed. The insurgents then set up their own local government and collected revenue in the district.

Emboldened by success they advanced on Delhi in March 1673, to the alarm of the citizens, who credited the Satnamis with occult powers making them invulnerable to ordinary weapons. Aurangzeb sent a strong force to meet the insurgents and countered the magic which had shaken the morale of the troops by binding amulets to their standards. After a hard fight the Satnamis were almost annihilated. The successful general, Radandaz Khan, was given the

*The Satnami  
Rebellion.*

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III. pp. 330-336.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, J. D. Cunningham, ed. H. L. O. Garrett (1918), p. 5.



title of Shujaat Khan and, less than two years later, was killed in action on the north-west frontier.

The son and the grandson of Akbar both had trouble with the Sikhs for secular causes. Jahangir had executed Arjun as a rebel and partisan of Prince Khusru<sup>1</sup>; and Shah Jahan had been obliged shortly after his accession to assert the imperial authority over his Sikh subjects at the cost of more than one defeat. But Aurangzeb came into conflict with the growing power of Sikhism on purely religious grounds.

*Aurangzeb and the Sikhs.*

The founder of the Sikh faith, Nanak, a Hindu of Talwandi (Nankana), who lived from 1469 to 1539,<sup>2</sup> preached a religion which entirely rejected Brahmanism, but accepted the doctrine of transmigration. The Japji, which is an epitome of the Sikh Scriptures, begins with the words: "There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator."<sup>3</sup> The religion forbids idolatry, caste exclusiveness, *suti*, the immurement of women, wine, tobacco, infanticide and pilgrimages to Hindu sacred places.<sup>4</sup>

The Sikhs, as Sir Patrick Fagan<sup>5</sup> has said, are "neither a race, not a nationality, nor a caste, but primarily the followers of a religion." Arjun organized the Sikhs into a theocratic community, with the *Granth* as its religious code, the pool and temple at Amritsar as its centre, and a chief in the person of the guru.<sup>6</sup>

This was the religious association whose "temples Aurangzeb ordered to be destroyed, and the guru's agents for collecting the tithes (one-tenth of the total income) and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities."<sup>7</sup> When Aurangzeb's indiscriminate persecution began the guru was Tegh Bahadur, whose sympathies had led him in 1668 to serve in the Mogul ranks on an expedition to Assam. Tegh Bahadur was not one to submit to religious oppression and he openly defied Aurangzeb. When he was captured

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41 and footnote. Some authorities give 1538.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sikh Religion*, M. A. Macauliffe (1909), Vol. I. p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xxiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Political India*, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 51, 52

<sup>7</sup> Khafi Khan, quoted in *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III. p. 354, footnote

and taken to Delhi the Emperor ordered him to accept Islam, and on his refusal the guru was beheaded after five days' torture at the end of 1675. Tegh Bahadur may not, if certain modern critics are right, have made the celebrated prophecy attributed to him when confronting Aurangzeb: "I see a power rising in the West which will sweep your empire into the dust." But the saying was handed down by the Sikhs and remembered by the Punjab regiments in 1857 before the walls of Delhi.

Tegh Bahadur left behind him a son Govind, then a boy of fifteen, of whom it had been prophesied before his birth, that "he would convert jackals into tigers and sparrows into hawks." Govind, the tenth and last guru, inspired the Sikhs, who now added Singh (lion) to their names, with an undying hatred of Islam; and he created the Khalsa, a combination of religious fervour and warlike temper, which was destined to exert a profound influence upon Northern India.

In 1679 Aurangzeb reimposed the *jizya*, the tax on *ximmi*, or unbelievers, which had been abolished for a hundred and fifteen years, "in order to spread Islam and put down the practice of infidelity." The Emperor interpreted the expression in the Koran, that the tax should be paid "with the hand of humility," to enforce personal payment to the collector under insulting conditions. The renewal of the tax caused considerable outcry and brought a reasoned and outspoken letter of remonstrance from Sivaji.<sup>1</sup> In the Mogul portion of the Deccan the *jizya* could only be collected by force, but it succeeded to an appreciable extent in its object as "many Hindus who were unable to pay turned Muhammadan to obtain relief from the insults of the collectors."<sup>2</sup>

There were, however, exemptions, comprising all government officials (who were best able to afford the tax), women, children below fourteen, and slaves. The poorest class scheduled, such as dyers and shoe-makers, only paid when their gross professional

<sup>1</sup> Given at the end of this Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Manucci, *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 117, 118.

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income left a sufficient margin to maintain their families. The three grades of the tax were 12, 24 and 48 *dirhams* ( $3\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $6\frac{2}{3}$  and  $13\frac{1}{2}$  rupees) a year, which Sir Jadunath Sarkar estimates to have meant 6 per cent. to the poorest class and less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per thousand to the richest.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the case of the poorest the tax annually took the full value of one year's food as the price of religious indulgence.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1678 Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur (Marwar), who commanded in the Khaibar, died at Jamrud. Jodhpur lay on the main trade route between the Mogul capital and Ahmadabad, and Aurangzeb had always disliked its semi-independence. There was at the moment no direct heir to the throne, Jaswant's best troops were on the Afghan frontier, and the Emperor seized his opportunity to annex the country. Muhammadan officers were posted to the Jodhpur administration and arrangements were made for new revenue statements. At the same time Aurangzeb occupied the country in force, and resistance was impossible. After the Emperor's return to Delhi at the beginning of April to impose the *jizya* the temples of Jodhpur city were demolished.

But in the meanwhile, in February 1679, Ajit Singh, a posthumous son of the late Maharaja was born in Lahore. The Rajput ministers then petitioned the Emperor to recognize Ajit Singh as their future ruler. Aurangzeb ordered the boy, who was taken to Delhi in June, to be brought up in his harem with the promise of rank as a Mogul noble and investiture as raja when he came of age. One account affirms that the throne was offered to Ajit Singh on condition that he turned Moslem.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Sarkar's calculation. It is based on the market rates given for the end of the sixteenth century in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, i. 63. W. H. Moreland (*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Ch. V), reaches the conclusion that the price of food, periods of famine excepted, remained almost stationary throughout the seventeenth century with no rise in wages.

<sup>3</sup> This account is based on Ch. XXVI. of the *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III. The probability of the religious condition is discussed on p. 374.

Aurangzeb's attitude towards the rightful heir roused the Rajputs to action, and Durgadas, the intrepid and gifted son of Jaswanth's minister Askaran, resolved to rescue Ajit Singh and his mother from the fortress where they were guarded. In this he succeeded, but of the band who cut their way through the streets of Delhi and kept their Mogul pursuers at bay along the road to safety only Durgadas and seven of his Rathor Rajputs came back alive to Jodhpur.

The imperial edicts against Hinduism had infuriated the Rajputs, and it was now open war between Aurangzeb and Rajasthan, only Jaipur holding aloof. The Emperor took the field in overwhelming force with his three sons, Muazzam, Azam and Akbar in the higher commands, and the Rajputs, under Maharana Raj Singh of Udaipur, retired before the invaders into the Aravali hills between the two main lines of advance. Aurangzeb occupied Jodhpur, Udaipur and Chitor before the end of February 1680 without serious opposition, to find his lines of communication incessantly attacked and his outposts surprised by an enemy who had once been the backbone of the Mogul army. The imperial forces lost their morale and their mobility, the army in Mewar was threatened with starvation by the capture of supply trains; and Aurangzeb holding Akbar responsible relieved him of his command.

Akbar was a young man of twenty-three, full of energy and restless ambition, and he felt his relegation keenly. The Rajputs were quick to take the opportunity this offered and through Tahavvur Khan, the prince's second in command, Akbar was led to listen to their proposals. Durgadas pointed out (as Sivaji had written to the Emperor) that Aurangzeb's bigotry threatened the existence of the Mogul empire; and if his heritage was to be saved Akbar must seize the throne and return to the policy of his ancestors. He would have at his back the armed strength of the two greatest Rajput clans, the Sisodias and the Rathors. Akbar had not far to go to find a precedent for filial disloyalty, and four of his theologians formally declared that Aurangzeb had forfeited the throne by his violation of Islamic canon law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol III. pp. 404-406.

On the 2nd January 1681 Akbar marched from Marwar, and on the 15th he was within three miles of imperial headquarters. The Mogul armies were at Chitor and the Raj Samudra lake, the bodyguard was away on special service, and the court officials and servants, clerical staff and invalided soldiers on light duty totalled about ten thousand men. Aurangzeb was in no position to fight a host of 70,000 with the flower of the Rajput army in its ranks. But the Emperor was a master of political manœuvre. That night he wrote a letter which Louis XI of France might well have envied, in which it appeared that he and his son were in collusion and that Akbar was playing his confederates false in a deeply laid plot; and he saw that this letter fell into the hands of the Rajputs. At the same time he decoyed Tahavvur Khan, the mainspring of Akbar's revolt, over to his camp and murdered him. The sudden disappearance of Tahavvur Khan lent additional force to the incriminating letter, and the entire Rajput army disappeared in the night leaving the prince with no more than his personal bodyguard of 350 mounted men.

Akbar rode after the Rajputs and succeeded in persuading them of his loyalty. But the opportunity had gone for ever. Durgadas escorted the prince to the court of Sivaji's son Sambaji, and a year or so later Akbar took ship to Persia where he spent the remainder of his life.

In June 1681 peace was made with Udaipur, by which the maharana ceded a few districts and the Emperor agreed not to impose the *jizya* on the Rajput kingdom. The war with Jodhpur dragged on until 1709 when Ajit Singh entered his capital in triumph and Aurangzeb's son and successor Bahadur Shah I acknowledged him as ruler of the state.

But Aurangzeb had lost the support of more than Udaipur and Jodhpur. The loyalty of almost all the Rajput clans was alienated. Lawlessness overflowed fitfully into Malwa and endangered the vitally important Mogul road to the Deccan; and in the incessant wars which filled the rest of the reign the Bundela clan and a few Hada and Kachhwah families supplied the only Rajput soldiers the Emperor could enlist to fight in his armies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol III. Ch. XXXVII.

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Aurangzeb, having come to terms with the Maharana of Udaipur in June 1681, turned his attention to the Deccan.

*The Deccan.* Sivaji had created a state in the Konkan and it was protected by chains of strong hill forts with the support of the celebrated Maratha infantry. The power to which Sivaji's son Sambaji had succeeded in 1680 was too strong to be ignored. Moreover, the Emperor, a fervent Sunni, was hostile to the Shia rulers of Bijapur and Golconda, kingdoms which had not as yet been forced to acknowledge Mogul supremacy. The Emperor made up his mind to establish his ascendancy in the Deccan, and when he moved south Northern India became a group of provincial governments while the resources of the overgrown empire were being exhausted beyond the Vindhya hills.

But before dealing with the campaigns which occupied Aurangzeb for the rest of his reign it is necessary to describe the original foundation of the power which was destined to expand in the eighteenth century into the Maratha Confederacy.

Maharashtra, the land of the Marathas, was the hilly country east of the Western Ghats. With a good climate and a poor soil its people, the Kunbis (the great agricultural caste of the Deccan), have always been hardy and self-reliant, energetic and courageous. Social differences were not so sharply defined as in other parts of Hindu India, and this spirit of the early days of Maratha political dominance may be partly attributed to the great literary movement of Maharashtra, its Bakhti school of poetry.

*The Marathas* The first of these poets was Eknath, who was persecuted by his brother Brahmans for his bold denunciation of the caste system. The most famous of his works is the Marathi rendering of the *Bhagavat* with its doctrine of personal service of God as the only road to salvation; a lasting memorial of his struggle on behalf of the language of the common people of Maharashtra. Eknath died in 1608, the year in which Tukaram, the greatest of the Bakhti devotional poets, was born. Tukaram was not only foremost in the crusade against the "empty ritual and barren ceremonial of Brahman priestcraft"; he has been described as the Kabir of the Marathas.

and no other poet has contributed so many familiar quotations to the common speech of Maharashtra.

It was, however, the rise to power of the Sudra Sivaji, with the admixture of castes that filled his civil administration and flocked to his standard, which gave the mass of the people their most definite ideas of a common nationality and the limitations of an exclusive caste system. But in the words of S. M. Edwardes<sup>1</sup>: "When Sivaji's descendants degenerated into a line of royal phantoms and the Peshwas" (who were Konkani Brahmans) "usurped all power, the ancient spirit of caste-exclusiveness reasserted itself with redoubled force."

The Marathas were a stout-hearted people who had been renowned as soldiers since the days when they fought under Pulikesin II against the Emperor Harsha. The Moslem conquests had turned them into first-rate mercenary troops who sold their swords to the new rulers of the Deccan, and some of them rose to positions of importance.

The most successful of these adventurers was the father of Sivaji. Born in 1594, Shahji Bhonsla had lived in troublous times. He married Jiji Bai the daughter of one of the great Ahmadnagar nobles, and he first saw service under Malik Ambar. Later he fought for his own hand, joined the Moguls and deserted their service, sided against the Bijapuris, and then finally threw in his lot with them. Shahji was powerful enough, by the year 1633, when the kingdom of Ahmadnagar was destroyed by Shah Jahan, to set up a puppet Nizam Shah and govern in his name the wide extent of the old Nizam Shahi dominions which he was able to conquer. Shahji's enterprising rule ended with his complete defeat in 1636 by the Moguls and, returning to the service of Bijapur, he was confirmed in his *jagirs* of Chamargunda and Poona.

Sivaji was born in 1627, and on the foundation of his father's position he began, at the age of nineteen, to build up a lordship for himself with the band of lawless Mavali hillmen whom he gathered together. Fort after fort fell

<sup>1</sup> In his editorial introduction to Grant Duff's *History of the Marhattas* (ed. 1921), where a summary of Marathi literature is given.

into his hands until he possessed a large and strongly protected domain in the neighbourhood of Poona. While he was extending his authority in the highlands Sivaji was careful to keep friendly with the State of Bijapur in which his father was serving.

But in 1649 the rich strip of country between the Western Ghats and the sea became too strong a temptation, and he came down and seized the seaport towns in the Kalyan and Kolaba districts. The Bijapur government promptly used Shahji as a hostage, and Sivaji was forced to remain quiet for the next five years. "This was the beginning," in the words of Khafi Khan, "of that system of violence which he and his descendants spread over . . . the Konkan. . . . Whenever he heard of a prosperous town or of a district inhabited by thriving cultivators, he plundered it and took possession of it."

But while cruelty, treachery and murder are, in Grant Duff's estimate of Sivaji's character,<sup>1</sup> justly alleged against him, the great Maratha leader proved by his actions his genuine and impartial respect for the holy men of all sects, Moslem as much as Hindu; and his chivalry to women and strict enforcement of morality in his camp were a wonder in that age and extorted the admiration of hostile critics like Khafi Khan.<sup>2</sup> The influence of his mother, a devout Hindu lady, was, to quote Mr. Justice Ranade, "a factor of prime importance in the making of Sivaji's career and the chief source of his strength." As long as she lived he is said to have consulted her in all the great crises of his life.<sup>3</sup>

In 1655 Sivaji, who had been steadily consolidating his conquests, took advantage of the hostilities between Aurangzeb (then Mogul Viceroy of the Deccan) and the State of Bijapur to seize almost the whole of the Konkan, and its important seaports now fell into his hands. But when peace was declared between the Moguls and Bijapur, the Deccan kingdom was able to turn its attention to Sivaji, and in 1659 an expedition was sent under Afzal Khan against the Maratha State.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. pp. 228, 229.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV. pp. 233, 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 128, 129.



The Bijapur forces made slow progress through the hills, and Afzal Khan conceived the misguided plan of capturing by treachery an adversary infinitely more cunning than himself. Sivaji was invited to a parley and, having learnt the details of his opponent's scheme, accepted, and made his own plans accordingly. The understanding was that neither leader should carry weapons, though each was to bring two armed retainers and an envoy. But when Afzal Khan suddenly attacked him with a dagger which the Maratha's concealed armour made harmless, Sivaji produced his own hidden weapons, a set of steel claws in the form of a knuckle-duster and a workman-like dagger, with which he mortally wounded his adversary. In the scuffle which followed Afzal Khan was finished off, and Sivaji, by a preconcerted signal, launched his whole army from their ambush upon the leaderless Bijapur forces. The Bijapur army was overwhelmed. The losses amounted to 3000 killed and a large number of prisoners, while 65 elephants, 4000 horses, 1200 camels and a large quantity of treasure fell into Sivaji's hands. The Marathas then carried the war into the enemy's country, and continued their successful invasion until April 1660, when Sivaji was recalled by a dangerous threat against his own dominions.

After his second coronation in 1659 Aurangzeb sent Shayista Khan to replace Prince Muazzam as Viceroy of the Deccan, with orders to suppress Sivaji. Shayista made an alliance with Bijapur, and in May 1660 the campaign began, the two armies operating respectively from the north and south.

The Marathas retired into the hills, where they could meet their enemies on more favourable terms, but by the middle of August Sivaji had lost the forts of Panhala and Chakan. Hostilities then slackened into desultory warfare, as Shayista Khan was apparently reluctant to face the heavy losses incurred by assaulting the hill forts.<sup>1</sup> But in April 1663 Sivaji made a characteristically daring raid upon Shayista Khan's headquarters at Poona, where the general had been in otiose residence for nearly three years. Pretending to be Deccani troops, Sivaji with 400 men entered the Mogul camp

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. I pp. 151, 152

after dark. At midnight they broke into the general's house, forced their way into Shayista's own room, indiscriminately cut down about fifty people of both sexes in the darkness, the general himself being wounded, and then safely withdrew in the confusion.<sup>1</sup>

The fame of this exploit added enormously to Sivaji's prestige, but it broke Shayista, who had promptly retired to a safer residence at Aurangabad. The Viceroy was shortly transferred to Bengal, then regarded as a penal province and described by Aurangzeb as "a hell well stocked with bread," where Shayista Khan ruled firmly and humanely for about thirty years.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1664 Sivaji followed up this enterprise by attacking and sacking the Mogul seaport of Surat, with the exception of the English and Dutch factories which successfully defied the raiders.

Aurangzeb was now thoroughly roused and poured troops into the Maratha country. The villages were ravaged, Rajgarh the capital was threatened, and in June 1665 Sivaji made peace by which he surrendered twenty of his forts.

In the following year the Maratha chief and his son Sambaji were persuaded to attend the court at Agra. But the Emperor deliberately slighted him in open darbar and made Sivaji virtually a prisoner in his own house, from which the two Marathas escaped concealed in a large fruit basket. If Aurangzeb had shown ordinary tact and recognized the importance of the Maratha chief, Sivaji would in all probability have helped the Emperor to conquer Bijapur and Golconda and as a vassal would have brought the whole of the Deccan, at least for a time, within the Empire.<sup>3</sup> But Aurangzeb was not the man to seek the friendship or the alliance of those whom he hated as infidels.

From 1666 until 1668 Sivaji organized his internal administration and two years later renewed his external activities by again sacking Surat and by instituting his system of blackmail on districts within the Mogul empire. This was a levy of one-fourth of the yearly revenue due to the

*Sivaji Establishes  
a Kingdom.*

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV. pp. 47-51.

<sup>2</sup> See *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 118-167.

<sup>3</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 137, 138

government, and was known as *chauth*. The sack of Surat caused fresh hostilities with the empire; but the Mogul forces met with little or no success, and in June 1674 Sivaji was enthroned with full Vedic rites as sovereign ruler of Maharashtra.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1676 and 1680 Sivaji was actively at war. In a succession of brilliant campaigns the great fortresses of Jinji and Vellore were taken, and by annexing the Western Carnatic from Belgaum to the Tungabhadra he established his rule over a large portion of the old Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar.

Sivaji's eldest son, a youth of nineteen, violent and capricious in character and notoriously depraved in morals, was a source of great anxiety to his father; and in 1678 Sambaji went over to the enemy and joined Dilir Khan, the Afghan general commanding the Mogul army in the south, then mobilizing to invade Bijapur. Sambaji was appointed a Commander of Seven Thousand, but his value as an ally was negligible and in little over a year he returned to his father.

Sivaji died of fever and dysentery on the 5th April 1680 before he had completed his fifty-third year.

The form of government organized by Sivaji was the system laid down by Kautalya. As Grant Duff observes, *Sivaji's Administration*, nothing in regard to him is more remarkable than the fitness of his arrangements for the genius of his countrymen; and the root of all the Maratha systems of government which appeared later, however much amended, is found in the institutions of Sivaji. The central government consisted of a council of state with eight members who were in charge of the government departments; and all these ministers, except the superintendent of judicial affairs and the adviser on religion, judicial astrology and science, held military commands. The immemorial Hindu institution of a jury of neighbours, the *panchayat*, was preserved intact, and almost all civil disputes were settled by that body.

The three viceregal provinces into which the Maratha kingdom

<sup>1</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 140.

was divided were administered on similar lines. Agriculture was encouraged by loans, and in the districts under the central government (known as *swaraj*) revenue officials with regular salaries took the place of the bad old method of farming out land revenue to hereditary landlords. These revenue officers had no political powers over the inhabitants of the district. There were other districts (*Mughlai*) under the government of other rulers over whom the Marathas claimed suzerainty and from whom one-fourth of the revenue (*chauth*) and an additional payment of one-tenth of the authorized annual assessment were levied.

Originally the Maratha forces consisted almost entirely of mounted yeomen who spent half the year on their fields. But Sivaji introduced a standing army and founded his power upon his infantry, though his cavalry later on were to "spread the terror of the Maratha name where the existence of such a people was unknown."<sup>1</sup> He also strongly fortified the harbours of Kolaba, Suvarndrug and Geriah, and built up a navy. Under Darya and Mai Naik there began the Maratha piracy which became so great a menace to shipping in the eighteenth century.

In regard to the Maratha administration Sarkar has observed: "There was no attempt at . . . organized communal improvement, spread of education or unification of the people, either under Sivaji or under the Peshwas. The cohesion of the people in the Maratha State was not organic but artificial, accidental and therefore precarious. It was solely dependent on the ruler's extraordinary personality, and disappeared when the country ceased to produce supermen."<sup>2</sup>

On Sivaji's death his younger son Raja Ram attempted to gain the throne. But at the end of four months *Sambaji*. Sambaji deposed his brother, crushed all opposition with vindictive cruelty and was crowned with full ceremony in February 1681.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Shivaji and his Times* (Calcutta), 1919, pp. 485, 486.

To complete the description of the political situation in the Deccan at this period a reference must be made to the two Shia kingdoms.

*The Shia Kingdoms.*

"The history of Bijapur from 1672 to 1686 is really the history of its *wazirs* (chief ministers). It was a period marked by chronic civil war among the factious nobles, independence of the provincial governors, paralysis of the central administration in the capital itself, occasional but indecisive Mogul invasions, and a secret alliance but pretended hostility with the Marathas."<sup>1</sup>

For nearly half a century Golconda was ruled in name by the worthless and profligate Abdullah Qutb Shah (1626-72), and the State was at the mercy of disorder and tyranny. The impoverishment of the country, under the farming system of revenue collection by district officers liable to flogging in case of default, has been described at length by Moreland.<sup>2</sup> Bijapur, where the Hindus seem to have been depressed as a deliberate policy, was in hardly a better condition, and revenue farming with its attendant evils was the regular practice in the Hindu territories of the south.<sup>3</sup>

Only the astute diplomacy of his mother and his eldest son-in-law saved Golconda during the reign of Abdullah from complete annexation. After Abdullah's death Abdul Hassan fought his way to the throne and the Brahman Madanna, under the title of Surya Prakash Rao, became his prime minister. In the opinion of the East India Company's officials at Madras in 1676: "Madanna has sole control and nothing is thought of but peeling and squeezing the people." With Bijapur in a state of chaos, faction fights and changes of regency, Madanna exchanged the foreign policy of a secret understanding with the Adil-Shahi government for an alliance with Sivaji; and this alliance, with the subsidy to the Marathas which cemented it, was renewed with his successor.<sup>4</sup>

The political situation in the Deccan in 1681 has been summed up by Sarkar: "The Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda could never for a moment forget that the sleepless aim of the Mogul Emperor

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. IV. p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *From Akbar to Aurangzib*, pp. 239-243

<sup>3</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. IV. pp. 330-331

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 244-245

was their . . . extinction and the annexation of all their territories. They had at all times had Maratha auxiliaries . . . Shahji Bhonsla . . . Sivaji . . . and Sambaji their only shield in the hour of supreme danger. A union of hearts between Bijapur and Golconda and the Mogul Empire was a psychological impossibility.”<sup>1</sup>

Aurangzeb's determination to make an end of the Shia and Maratha powers of the Deccan was strengthened by the danger to his throne which threatened from the presence of his rebel son Akbar at Sambaji's court. The Emperor accordingly moved south with his great army and splendid camp equipage to spend the last twenty-six years of his life in the field while the Deccan ulcer ate away his power.

*Aurangzeb Invades the Deccan.*

He reached Aurangabad on the 22nd March 1682, and Muazzam and Azam were sent against the Marathas and Bijapur at the end of 1683. The next two years are a tale of military failure, of the escape of Akbar to Persia, and of heavy losses due to the unhealthiness of the climate of the Konkan. One or two Maratha forts were taken, but this was more than offset by the sack of Broach and Burhanpur. Then in April 1685 the Emperor advanced in person and laid siege to Bijapur, which fell in October 1686. Sikandar Ali Khan was made prisoner and the kingdom annexed.

*Annexation of Bijapur.*

The Mogul forces then invaded Golconda, and Hyderabad the capital with its fortress of immense strength was invested at the end of January 1687. Assaults and mining operations all failed, but eventually bribery and treachery succeeded. The fortress of Golconda was captured in September after a siege of eight months, and with it fell the last of the Shia kingdoms of the Deccan.<sup>2</sup>

*Annexation of Golconda*

Sambaji and his chief adviser Kalusha, a Brahman from Northern India, had watched the downfall of the Deccan kingdoms without striking a blow to save them. Sambaji was personally brave, and he had thoroughly beaten the

*Death of Sambaji.*

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb* Vol. IV pp. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> A full description may be found in the *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV. Ch. XLVII.

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Portuguese in 1683, although he failed before Chaul and Goa. But both he and his minister preferred debauchery to campaigning, conduct which had alienated many of the Maratha chiefs.

In January 1689, Muqarrab Khan, who had deserted from Golconda during the siege and been rewarded with a high command by Aurangzeb, located Sambaji at Sangmeshwar and his spies reported that the usual Maratha military precautions had been relaxed. Muqarrab Khan started at once with a flying column through the hills and forests of the Western Ghats and with 300 troopers covered the ninety miles from Kolhapur in under three days. Sambaji and his minister were captured and taken to imperial headquarters. On their refusing to turn Muhammadan they were tortured to death in March 1689.<sup>1</sup>

Rajgarh the Maratha capital fell in October and the entire royal family with the exception of Raja Ram were captured. With his objectives gained Aurangzeb pushed south and carried his conquests as far as Tanjore and Trichinopoly. As Sarkar has said in his *Studies in Mughal India*<sup>2</sup>: "All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb now, but in reality all was lost. . . . The Empire had become too large to be ruled by one man or from one centre. . . . His enemies rose on all sides; he could defeat but not crush them for ever. Lawlessness reigned in many parts of Northern and Central India. The administration grew slack and corrupt." The war in the Deccan so depleted the imperial treasury that for the last ten years of the reign the pay of the troops was usually three years in arrears.<sup>3</sup>

Aurangzeb was soon to discover that the Marathas were far from being subdued. Raja Ram had escaped to Jinji, one of the strongest fortresses in the south, and for seven years repeated efforts by the best imperial generals failed to take it. Finally it fell by escalade in January 1698. Raja Ram, who had conducted the defence, made his escape to Satara where he collected a large force and continued his operations in the field.

The years of warfare with the Marathas from 1689 to 1707

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV. pp. 396-403.

<sup>2</sup> In the Chapter "Aurangzeb," p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> *The Later Mughals*, W. Irvine, Vol. I. p. 9, footnote.

proved a disheartening struggle for the imperial armies. In the Western Ghats the forts offered obstinate resistance, and in the Deccan itself the Marathas plundered the country, cut off convoys and repeatedly defeated the Mogul columns. Gemelli Careri, an Italian doctor who visited imperial headquarters in 1695, gives an interesting account of the great camp at Galgala. The tide of demoralization which eventually reduced the Mogul armies to a laughing-stock had just begun to flow in full force, though to all appearance Aurangzeb was the lord paramount of Northern India, the Deccan and the south as far as Tanjore.

The camp was thirty miles in circumference, and held about a million people, the army consisting of 60,000 cavalry, 100,000 infantry, 3000 elephants and 50,000 camels. This huge population ate up all the provisions for miles around, and whenever the lines of communication with the north were cut by the Marathas, Galgala ran considerable danger of starvation. The Emperor's simple way of living was not followed by his officers. Luxury, effeminacy and corruption were rampant. Discipline, even among the French mercenaries, did not exist.<sup>1</sup>

In March 1700 Raja Ram died, and in April Satara surrendered on terms. But Raja Ram's widow Tara Bai carried on the campaign with equal energy and considerable success. The Mogul troops would capture a position one day only to lose it the next, while famine, pestilence and flood weakened the ranks of a demoralized army.

In October 1705 Aurangzeb became seriously ill and "slowly and with difficulty" reached Ahmadnagar in the following January pursued by the Maratha horse. The old man of ninety lingered on for a year, while his second son Azam was deep in intrigue to secure the throne and busy plotting against the life of his younger brother Kham Baksh, Aurangzeb's favourite son.

Early in February 1707 the Emperor realized that he was dying, and he sent Azam and Kam Baksh to their provinces of Bijapur and Malwa. Then with the fear of future torment in his heart he prepared for death. Like another puritan and iconoclast, Crom-

<sup>1</sup> *Travellers in India*, E. F. Oaten, pp. 232-236.



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well, the one dictator of England, his spirit passed in the midst of a violent storm; and Aurangzeb died on the 20th February 1707.

During the closing years of the reign the tenth Sikh Guru Gobind emerged from a retirement which had lasted twenty years to found the Khalsa among the Jats, and proclaimed his aspirations to vanquish the Mogul armies and destroy the empire of "unbelieving" oppressors. In 1695 he established forts in the foothills between the Sutlej and the Jumna, and between that date and 1701 he routed two Mogul commanders who were sent against him. Aurangzeb then ordered the Governors of Lahore and Sirhind to crush the leader who called himself the True King, and Govind Singh was surrounded at Anandpur. The guru succeeded in escaping, but his forces were broken by defeat and desertion, his sons were killed and Govind Singh became a fugitive until after the death of Aurangzeb, when he took service with Bahadur Shah.<sup>1</sup>

Aurangzeb had carefully prepared himself for the kingship, and he set himself a course of policy from which nothing could make him swerve. He spent his whole life doing what he held to be his duty to his religion, and he believed treachery, violence and intolerance to be fully justified in furthering his ideals. He had ruthlessly exterminated all his rivals of his own family to secure the throne; and for this he felt no remorse. His one reference in his death-bed letters<sup>2</sup> to the horrors accompanying his succession was to Kam Baksh: "Dara Shikoh made unsound arrangements and hence he failed to reach his point. He increased the salaries of his retainers . . . but at the time of need got less and less work out of them. Hence he was unhappy." In the pursuit of what he believed to be right, the suppression of infidelity, Aurangzeb hastened the ruin of a great Empire. This he realized, and he is reported to have said towards the end of his career: "After me will come the deluge."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 66-81.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. V. pp. 259-262; *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>3</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 155.

His industry in conducting the affairs of State was stupendous. But his suspicious nature led him to interfere incessantly with his governors and other officials. Their initiative was consequently destroyed, to the serious detriment of the public service, and towards the end of his life his ministers had become little more than clerks to register his edicts.

But apart from his actions as a ruler there is much to admire in Aurangzeb. His coolness and courage were proverbial, and throughout his long reign he was never known to lose his temper. He possessed the royal attribute of never forgetting a face, and both as Prince and Emperor he displayed a tact, sagacity and humility which made the highest nobles of the court his friends.<sup>1</sup>

Doctor Gemelli Careri<sup>2</sup> gives an interesting description of the Emperor when nearly eighty: "Aurangzeb was of a low stature, with a large nose, slender and stooping with age. The whiteness of his round beard was more visible on his olive skin. He was clothed in plain white muslin and wore a turban adorned with a large emerald. I admired to see him endorse the petitions with his own hand, without spectacles, and by his cheerful smiling countenance seem to be pleased with his employment."

In the rigid austerity of his way of living the Emperor allowed himself no relaxations, and his Moslem subjects regarded him as a saint. The simplicity of his life is illustrated by the instructions he gave for his funeral. He was buried in a coffin which cost five rupees, the proceeds of the sale of caps which he had quilted himself, while the 300 rupees which he ordered to be distributed to the poor had been earned by making copies of the Koran.<sup>3</sup>

Aurangzeb possessed a distinctly sardonic humour. The story is told by Manucci<sup>4</sup> that the Emperor on his way to the mosque one Friday, after he had prohibited music, met a funeral attended by about a thousand people. When he asked who was dead he

<sup>1</sup> *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. V. pp. 473-476.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 476, 477, quoting *Churchill's Voyages*, IV. p. 222, and *Travellers in India*, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Storia do Mogor*, tr. by W. Irvine (Indian Text Series, London, 1907), Vol. II. p. 8.

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was told: "The king by his orders has killed Music and we are bearing her to her grave." "Pray for the soul of Music," replied Aurangzeb, "and see that she is thoroughly well buried."

On another occasion the Emperor does not figure with equal success. A strict abstainer himself the use of alcohol by his subjects infuriated him. As Manucci tells the story: "Aurangzeb said one day that in all Hindustan no more than two men could be found who did not drink, namely himself and Abd-ul-Wahlab the chief Kazi appointed by him. But with respect to Abd-ul-Wahlab he was in error, for I myself sent him every day a bottle of spirits which he drank in secret so that the king did not find it out."<sup>1</sup>

Aurangzeb was a widely read and accurate scholar; and to his initiative the country owes its greatest digest of *Arts and Sciences*. Moslem law, the *Fatawah-i-Alamgiri*.<sup>2</sup>

There was but little building during the reign, and the style of Mogul architecture rapidly degenerated after Aurangzeb's accession; while the art of painting, though not discouraged by the Emperor, noticeably deteriorated.<sup>3</sup> "Not a single grand edifice, finely written manuscript, or exquisite picture commemorates Aurangzeb's reign."<sup>4</sup>

The causes which led to the fall of the Mogul Empire all existed in the reign of Aurangzeb. His successors were weak and, with the exception of Bahadur Shah, quite incompetent, who soon became puppets in the hands of their ministers, but the forces which had sprung up in the vast overgrown empire were too strong for any one ruler to control. The death of Aurangzeb opened the flood-gates of civil war, revolt and foreign invasion, the empire crumbled to pieces, and Mogul supremacy vanished for ever. Yet such was the prestige of the Timurid dynasty that "their name continued to be invoked by the powers that contended for supremacy . . . even when they fought against the Emperor's

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Storio*, II. pp. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Aurangzib*, V. pp. 477, 478.

<sup>3</sup> *Mughal Rule in India*, Ch. VIII.

<sup>4</sup> *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 51.

own authority. . . . (These) rising powers . . . were not necessarily rebels by intention. They sought some centre of authority; when Delhi broke down they attempted to substitute themselves as representing the Padishah better than any other power." <sup>1</sup>

Nor was this attitude confined to Muhammedan princes, to whom even the later Mogul Emperors symbolized religious as well as political sentiments. The Marathas under the rule of their ministers, the Peshwas, though they habitually raided the shrunken territories of Delhi, frequently acted in the Emperor's name, and were proud of such titles as they received, or extorted, from him. The rival European companies took this sentiment into account. Dupleix with his Mogul title of Zafar Jang Bahadur made use of imperial prestige in his schemes to drive out the English; the essential preliminary to the substitution "of a French government for that of the Moguls gradually and by degrees." <sup>2</sup> The East India Company developed their sovereignty in Bengal under the imperial name, and in the early years of the nineteenth century were still purporting to act under the authority of the Mogul Emperor.

After the death of Aurangzeb there began a conflict of rival influences, Maratha, Muhammadan and later, for a brief period, the French. It was half a century before any sign appeared that out of chaos a power would emerge capable of establishing, slowly but surely, a government which could give peace and unity to India.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XI

### SIVAJI'S LETTER TO AURANGZEB

Sivaji was, amongst other things, a clear-sighted statesman of the highest rank, but he was too illiterate to present the case for religious toleration in so polished a form. From the evidence it would seem that the letter sent by Sivaji was cast into shape by Munshi Nil Prabhu. This remarkably candid State paper is lightened by the reference to the Maratha leader's escape from Agra concealed in a country basket.

<sup>1</sup> A Yusuf Ali, *The Making of India*, Edn. 1925, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> De Bussy to Dupleix on French policy, 26th February 1754, quoted in *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, IV. p. 139.

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The letter is given in the *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III. pp. 325-329, and the original is now in the possession of the Maharaja of Kolapur. For evidence as to its genuineness see *ibid.*, p. 329, and *History of the Mahrattas*, by Grant Duff (Edn. 1921), Vol. I. footnote to p. 172.

Sivaji's historical summary is so admirable that, with the exception of two quotations, it is given below in full:

### To the EMPEROR ALAMGIR—

"This firm and constant well-wisher Sivaji, after rendering thanks for the grace of God and the favours of the Emperor,—which are clearer than the Sun,—begs to inform your Majesty that, although this well-wisher was led by his adverse Fate to come away from your august presence without taking leave, yet he is ever ready to perform, to the fullest extent possible and proper, everything that duty as a servant and gratitude demand of him.

"My excellent services and devotion to the welfare of the State are fully known to the princes, *khans*, *amirs*, *rajahs* and *rais* of India, to the rulers of Persia, Central Asia, Turkey and Syria, to the inhabitants of the seven climes of the globe, and to wayfarers on land and sea; and very likely their light has flashed on your Majesty's capacious mind. So with a view to rendering good service and earning the imperial favour, I submit the following words in a spirit of devotion to the public welfare:

"It has recently come to my ears that, on the ground of the war with me having exhausted your wealth and emptied the imperial treasury, your Majesty has ordered that money under the name of *jaziya* should be collected from the Hindus and the imperial needs supplied with it. May it please your Majesty! That architect of the fabric of empire (Jalaluddin), Akbar Padishah, reigned with full power for 52 (lunar) years. He adopted the admirable policy of perfect harmony in relation to all the various sects, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Dadu's followers, sky-worshippers, materialists, atheists, Brahman and Jain priests. The aim of his liberal heart was to cherish and protect all the people. So, he became famous under the title of 'the World's spiritual Guide.'

"Next, the Emperor Nuruddin Jahangir for 22 years spread his gracious shade on the head of the world and its dwellers, gave his heart to his friends and his hand to his work, and gained his desires. The Emperor Shah Jahan for 32 years cast his blessed shade on the head of the world and gathered in the fruit of eternal life,—which is only another name for goodness and fair fame,—as the result of his happy time on earth.

"Through the auspicious effect of this sublime disposition, wherever he (Akbar) bent the glance of his august wish, Victory and Success

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advanced to welcome him on the way. In his reign many kingdoms and forts were conquered. The state and power of these emperors can be easily understood from the fact that Alamgir Padishah has failed and become bewildered in the attempt to merely follow their political system. They, too, had the power of levying the *jaziya*; but they did not give place to bigotry in their hearts, as they considered all men, high and low, created by God, to be (living) examples of the nature of diverse creeds and temperaments. Their kindness and benevolence endure on the pages of Time as their memorial, and so prayer and praise for these (three) pure souls will dwell for ever in the hearts and tongues of mankind, among both great and small. Prosperity is the fruit of one's intentions. Therefore, their wealth and good fortune continued to increase, as God's creatures reposed in the cradle of peace and safety (in their reigns) and their undertakings were achieved.

"But in *your* Majesty's reign, many of the forts and provinces have gone out of your possession, and the rest will soon do so, too, because there will be no slackness on my part in ruining and devastating them. Your peasants are downtrodden; the yield of every village has declined, in the place of one lakh (of Rupees) only one thousand, and in the place of a thousand only ten are collected, and that too with difficulty. When Poverty and Beggary have made their homes in the palaces of the Emperor and the Princes, the condition of the grandees and officers can be easily imagined. It is a reign in which the army is in a ferment, the merchants complain; the Moslems cry, the Hindus are grilled; most men lack bread at night, and in the day inflame their own cheeks by slapping them (in anguish). How can the royal spirit permit you to add the hardship of the *jaziya* to this grievous state of things? The infamy will quickly spread from west to east and become recorded in books of history that the Emperor of Hindustan, coveting the beggars' bowls, takes *jaziya* from Brahmans and Jain monks, paupers, mendicants, ruined wretches and the famine-stricken,—that his valour is shown by attacks on the wallets of beggars,—that he dashes down (to the ground) the name and honour of the Timurids!

"May it please your Majesty! If you believe in the true Divine Book and Word of God (*i.e.*, the Quran), you will find there (that God is styled) Rabb-ul-alamîn, the Lord of all men, and not Rabb-ul-musalmin, the Lord of the Muhammadans only. Verily, Islam and Hinduism are antithetical terms. They are (diverse pigments) used by the true Divine Painter for blending the colours and filling in the outlines (of His picture of the entire human species). If it be a mosque, the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple, the bell is rung in yearning for Him only. To show bigotry for any man's creed and practices is (really) altering the words of the Holy

## AURANGZEB

Book. To draw (new) lines on a picture is to find fault with the painter.

"In strict justice the *jaziya* is not at all lawful. From the point of view of administration it can be right only if a beautiful woman wearing gold ornaments can pass from one country to another without fear or molestation. (But) in these days even the cities are being plundered, what of the open country? Not to speak of its injustice, this imposition of the *jaziya* is an innovation in India and inexpedient.

"If you imagine piety to consist in oppressing the people and terrorizing the Hindus, you ought first to levy *jaziya* from Rana Raj Singh, who is the head of the Hindus. Then it will not be so very difficult to collect it from me, as I am at your service. But to oppress ants and flies is far from displaying valour and spirit.

"I wonder at the strange fidelity of your officers that they neglect to tell you of the true state of things, but cover a blazing fire with straw! May the sun of your royalty continue to shine above the horizon of greatness!"

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1659. Formal enthronement of Aurangzeb.
- 1662-1663. Invasion of Assam by Mir Jumla.
- 1664. Foundation of French *Compagnie des Indes*.  
Sack of Surat by Sivaji.
- 1666. Death of Shah Jahan.  
Capture of Chittagong and extermination of Arakan pirates.
- 1667. Defeat of the Yusufzais.
- 1669. Aurangzeb began his Hindu persecutions.  
First of succession of Jat rebellions.
- 1672. Satnami rebellion.
- 1672-1678. Afridi rising.
- 1674. Enthronement of Sivaji.
- 1675. Execution of Tegh Bahadur the Sikh Guru.
- 1676-1680. Sivaji's conquests in Southern India.
- 1678. Death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur.
- 1679. Reimposition of the *jizya*.
- 1680. Rajput war begins (to end with Jodhpur in 1709).
- 1680. Death of Sivaji.
- 1681. Revolt of Prince Akbar.  
Accession of Sambaji.
- 1681. Peace with Udaipur.
- 1682. Aurangzeb invades the Deccan in person.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

- 1686. Annexation of Bijapur.
- 1687. Annexation of Golconda.
- 1689. Execution of Sambaji.  
Capture of Rajgarh and commencement of the indecisive campaigns  
against the Marathas.
- 1707. 20th February: death of Aurangzeb.

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## CHAPTER XII

### The Later Moguls and the Marathas

AURANGZEB was buried at Daulatabad on the 14th March 1707. He left to his three surviving sons the provinces *Bahadur Shah.* which he had assigned to them in his lifetime,<sup>1</sup> but he was hardly in his grave before all three were fighting each other to gain the whole empire. From this war of succession Muazzam, the eldest of the brothers, emerged victorious as Bahadur Shah, Emperor of India. His brothers, who were defeated and killed, Azam in June 1707 and Kam Baksh in January 1709, had ungovernable tempers and were quite unfitted to rule an empire. Bahadur Shah on the other hand was cultured and kindly, generous to a fault, gifted with great self-control and pious without being bigoted. An inability to say "no" was the weak point in his character,<sup>2</sup> but he had the good fortune to choose a competent chief minister in the Badakshi Munim Khan who was honest, conscientious and loyal; and Bahadur Shah, although not a great sovereign, fairly successfully maintained the dignity of the empire.

Immediately after the defeat of Azam Shah the new Emperor was faced with a Rajput rising. On the death of *Rajput* Aurangzeb, Ajit Singh had come out of hiding, *Rebellions.* gathered his Rathor clansmen and driven the Moslem officials out of Jodhpur. At the end of 1707 Bahadur Shah invaded the country and Ajit Singh submitted to superior force. He was given the title of Maharaja for himself, and lesser honours were distributed among his sons. Rana Amar Singh of Udaipur refused to do homage and retired into his fastnesses, and the Emperor moved

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, W. Irvine (ed. by Sir Jadunath Sarkar), Vol. I. pp. 5, 6 with footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 136-138.

down to the Deccan to deal with Kam Baksh without enforcing his surrender.

In 1710 the Rajputs again rose, and once more Bahadur Shah invaded Rajputana. The negotiations which were opened with the Rajputs were cut short by the news that the Sikhs were in revolt, and the Emperor, making a peace which left Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur independent in all but name, hurried off to the Punjab.

When Aurangzeb died Govind Singh the tenth Sikh Guru sided with Bahadur Shah and was given a command in the Deccan,<sup>1</sup> where, towards the end of 1708, he was murdered by a Pathan. After his death the Sikh scriptures, known as the *Granth*, became the spiritual representative of the Gurus with Govind's chosen disciple Banda the temporal leader of the Khalsa. The Sikhs gathered round him and in 1709 and 1710 Banda succeeded in defeating and killing the Governor of Sirhind, plundered the province and put to death the Hindu betrayer and Moslem assassin of Govind's children. Banda then occupied the country between the Sutlej and the Jhelum and devastated the district of Saharanpur.<sup>2</sup> It was at this point that the Emperor came north to find that the Sikhs had already been defeated and driven into the Jammu hills.

Bahadur Shah died at Lahore in February 1712, at the age of sixty-nine, and the inevitable war of succession immediately broke out.

Of the four sons of Bahadur Shah, the second Azim-ush-Shah had the largest following, and the eldest Jahandar Shah with neither troops nor money appeared to have the poorest chance as a claimant. But Jahandar Shah was joined by the able and unscrupulous Persian Zulfiqar Khan, who (with his father) had no rival in the kingdom either in rank or influence,<sup>3</sup> and soldiers and adventurers flocked to his standard. Zulfiqar Khan arranged an alliance between Jahandar Shah and his brothers Rafi-ush-Shah and Jahan Shah against Azim-ush-Shah who was defeated

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, footnote to p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I. pp. 9, 10.

and killed in the middle of March. Jahandar Shah then turned upon his brothers and the same fate befell Jahan Shah and Rafi-ush-Shah who were successively attacked. On the 29th March 1712 Jahandar Shah was enthroned as Emperor. Asad Khan kept his former position of Vice-regent and Zulfiqar Khan became chief minister.

Jahandar Shah was the first of the Timurids who could not rule himself, much less govern an empire. He was deposed and murdered by his nephew Farrukh-Siyar together with Zulfiqar Khan, after a debauched and disgusting career of eleven months. The only notable event in the reign was the reception of a Dutch embassy, which obtained through "the company's faithful friend" Asad Khan, concessions made useless a few months later by Farrukh-Siyar's successful rebellion.

Farrukh-Siyar entered Delhi as Emperor on the 12th February 1713 with the bodies of Jahandar Shah and Zulfiqar Khan paraded on elephants in the procession. *Farrukh-Siyar.* "Feeble, false, cowardly and contemptible,"<sup>1</sup> Farrukh-Siyar was almost entirely in the hands of his chief ministers, the two brothers Sayyid Abdullah Khan and Sayyid Hussain Ali, while the reign of terror which followed the Emperor's accession to power is attributed by Khafi Khan to the influence of Mir Jumla Mutamid-ul-mulk.<sup>2</sup> Mir Jumla, who was a native of Samarkand, was not related to the Persian merchant, statesman and soldier whose adventurous career had ended with honour during the reign of Aurangzeb.

The Sikhs had reunited under Banda during the war of succession and continued to give trouble by repeatedly raiding *End of Banda.* the Northern Punjab until an overpowering force was sent against them. Banda\* with 10,000 of his men was besieged in April 1715 in the stronghold of Gurdaspur, and for eight months the Sikhs held out until starvation forced them to unconditional surrender. The survivors were executed in batches of a hundred every day for a week and Banda was tortured to death. All save the leaders were offered their lives if they would accept Islam, but the

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I. p. 396

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 275-281, with which authority Irvine agrees. But p. 276 footnote offers an alternative, that the Sayyids were responsible.

Sikhs without exception exultantly preferred to die for their faith.<sup>1</sup> After the defeat and death of Banda persistent persecution drove the Sikhs into hiding for a generation.

Three other events of the reign may be noticed. In 1714 a Mission was sent to the Mogul court by the East India Company. In 1717 the *jizya*, which Farrukh-Siyar had abolished when he proclaimed himself Emperor, was reimposed. In 1718 Maratha levies came up to Delhi to take part in the disputes at the court, and their representative minister Balaji Visvanath negotiated a treaty with Hussain Ali giving them the *chauth* (one quarter) and the *ser dasmak* (additional tenth) of the whole remaining revenue of the Deccan. This treaty was ratified after the dethronement of the Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

Farrukh-Siyar "as irresolute in his actions as he was bold in his intrigues" had quarrelled intermittently with his Sayyid ministers almost from the day of his accession and had made more than one attempt to overthrow them. The court was divided into the factions of the foreign party made up of the Afghans, Persians, Arabs, negroes and Turks, and the Hindustani party of Indian-born Moslems (such as the Sayyids Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali) with the Rajput, Jat and other powerful Hindu landowners, groups which were cut across by the opposing cliques supporting either the Emperor or his ministers.<sup>3</sup> But Farrukh-Siyar succeeded in alienating most of his adherents, and in February 1719 the Sayyids "forced into action by regard for their own lives and honour,"<sup>4</sup> seized the Emperor and put him to death on the 28th April after barbarous ill-treatment.

Three Emperors were placed on the throne in the course of the next few months, of whom two were already dying of consumption while the third had been a State prisoner for years. Finally at the end of September 1719 a fourth descendant of Aurangzeb, Muhammad Shah, was enthroned by the Sayyids. He reigned in name for twenty-

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I. pp. 317, 318.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. pp. 336-339.

<sup>3</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I. pp. 272-275.

<sup>4</sup> Shah Nawaz Khan quoted (but not in any way justified as regards the Emperor's treatment and death) by Irvine, *The Later Mughals*, Vol. I. p. 395.

nine years and lived to see the break-up of the Empire and the invasion of Nadir Shah.

One of his first acts was to abolish the *jizya*, and although two unsuccessful attempts were shortly afterwards made to revive it, this engine of religious oppression was never used again in India.

Muhammad Shah remained completely in the hands of the Sayyid brothers until 1722, when he succeeded in getting rid of them. Hussain Ali was murdered and Abdullah thrown into prison, where he was ultimately poisoned.<sup>1</sup> The Sayyids had ruled with an iron hand, but after their overthrow the Emperor surrounded himself with inexperienced and wholly inept advisers, and what had been the paramount power in India began to drift on the tide of affairs from one generation to the next without exerting the smallest influence upon the history of the country.

Imperial control over the provinces was purely nominal within twenty years of the death of Aurangzeb. Murshid Quli Khan the greatest of the Bengal Viceroys, who died in 1725, combined the posts of Governor and Finance Minister of Bengal, Orissa and Bihar, and after his time the rulership of the richest province in India became hereditary.<sup>2</sup> The Persian, Sayyid Saadat Khan, progenitor of the kings of Oudh, was made governor of that province in 1723,<sup>3</sup> and proceeded to rule it in practical independence, while at the end of the same year the foundations of the great State of Hyderabad were laid by the ancestor of its present ruler.

When Farrukh-Siyar came to the throne Asaf Jah was one of the rising men in India. His family, which came originally from Samarkand, had supplied more than one great officer of State, and in 1713 Asaf Jah, already a distinguished soldier and provincial governor, was made Viceroy of the Deccan, as Nizam-ul-mulk. A staunch friend of Farrukh-Siyar he was relegated within two years to the insignificant Governorship of Moradabad by

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II. p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, F. D. Ascoli.

<sup>3</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II p. 135.

the Sayyids. The Nizam<sup>1</sup> began active hostilities against them, from which he issued as Viceroy of the Deccan. Appointed chief minister of the Empire in 1723, the Nizam soon found that his position was intolerable. The young Emperor was surrounded by companions who pandered to his lowest tastes, and he preferred their opinion to the counsel of his minister. "Public business was dealt with as if it were a child's toy. Revenue business was disposed of by the heads of the army, and night-watchmen decided cases instead of the qazi. The Emperor was immersed in pleasure, the nobles drunk with envy, the servants of the State starving."<sup>2</sup>

Thwarted at every turn in his efforts to end these abuses, the Nizam threw up his appointment in the following year and returned to his own province. He had been appointed "Deputy of the Empire," but Muhammad Shah saw that his deputy had every intention of becoming independent of Delhi and sent secret orders to Mubariz Khan, Governor of Hyderabad, to oust him from the Deccan. The Nizam completely defeated Mubariz in the autumn of 1724, and sent his head to court with a congratulatory letter on the victory obtained by the imperial arms.<sup>3</sup> But after the battle of Shakar Khera the Nizam exercised every prerogative of sovereignty except the use of the imperial scarlet umbrella, the recitation of the Friday prayer in his own name and the issue of coinage stamped with his own superscription. The countries south of the Narbada which had been won by the Moguls by more than a century of war were lost to them for ever.

The powerful organization created by the genius of Sivaji disappeared for a time after his death, although the extinction of the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda removed the check upon Maratha incursions and swarms of marauding horsemen devastated the Deccan. But the warlike Hindu population of Maharashtra were not united by the

*The Maratha Revival*

<sup>1</sup> This is actually a misnomer, but it is a simpler description than Nizam-ul-mulk, Mir Qamar-ud-din, Chin Qilich Khan Bahadur, Fath Jang, or Subahdar of the Deccan.

<sup>2</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II. pp. 131-134.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 356.

bond of a fixed determination to throw off a foreign yoke and vindicate their civil and religious liberties. Their guiding star was not patriotism but plunder,<sup>1</sup> and the country administered by Tara Bai, Raja Ram's young widow, was broken into factions all fighting for their own hand. In 1708 Bahadur Shah allowed Sambaji's son Shahu to return to his own people from the Mogul court, and he at once claimed and assumed the kingship, although it was five years before his ascendancy over the Marathas was assured. Unlike his predecessors, Shahu, while he styled himself King of the Hindus acknowledged the suzerainty of Delhi in his dealings with the Moguls.

Shahu, although he possessed the violent temper of his race, had none of the vices and cruelty of his father. He was *The First Peshwa.* a devout Hindu strongly favourable to the Brahmans, conciliatory in his policy and liberal to all religious establishments. From the first the most experienced Maratha ministers gathered round him, and the ablest of them all was the second minister, or Peshwa, Balaji Visvanath, a Konkani Brahman, who was appointed in 1714. The almost incredible rise of the Maratha people from a state of confusion and anarchy dates from the time when Balaji Visvanath became the trusted adviser of his sovereign, and a common interest was created and for a time preserved among the Maratha chiefs. Shahu, a man of average ability who cared for nothing but hawking, hunting and fishing, strongly disliked the details of administration. The outward show of deference to his position was enough for him, and he did not foresee that he was delegating a power which might supersede his own.

Sivaji's general system of administration was revived, but the spirit of patriotism which he had inspired was overlaid and smothered by the ruling passion, *Maratha Administration.* skilfully stimulated by the Peshwa, which united the Maratha chiefs, the pursuit of plunder. Every leader was encouraged to further activity by a definite share in new conquests, which it was to his own advantage to hold. This entailed an intricate partition of the *jagirs* and provinces which brought about a departure

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. pp. 303, 304.

from Sivaji's principle of the direct collection of taxes by the central government and the payment of all salaries and military pay by the Treasury. Maharashtra, which had been collectively referred to by Europeans up to the death of Raja Ram as "the Sivajis,"<sup>1</sup> now allowed its king a percentage of the revenue (later reduced to a fixed allowance) for his privy purse, while the Peshwa controlled and allotted the remainder.

The financial system introduced by Balaji Visvanath was so complicated that only the most highly educated officials, that is to say the Brahmans, could understand it. The bulk of the revenue came from the levy made upon territories of other powers. The whole authorised *chauth* could never be collected, arrears ran on, and the total claims remained undefined; but, in the words of Grant Duff, "the one system in practice, that of exacting as much as they could, was as simple as it was invariable." A district once overrun by the Marathas was said to be under tribute from usage, and the others were plundered by virtue of letters patent.<sup>2</sup>

The Maratha fleet, under the Angria family, levied their taxation<sup>3</sup> at sea, indiscriminately plundering the ships of all nationalities that appeared on the coast. The Angrias, justly notorious as bold and successful pirates, were of mixed Maratha and either Portuguese or Arab descent.<sup>4</sup> Kanoji Angria, who was given ten forts, including Kolaba, Suvarndrug and Gheria (Viziadrug), by Balaji Visvanath in 1713 as an inducement to support Shahu,<sup>5</sup> was a leader of genius and enterprise. He made his position so secure that he was able to defy the efforts of the English government of Bombay, the Portuguese and the Dutch to take his fortified harbour.

In the same way as the Magh pirates of Chittagong had attracted Portuguese desperadoes many of the worst members of the crews of the Maratha ships were Europeans and, as Philip Gosse has remarked, Englishmen.<sup>6</sup> One of Angria's captains was a thorough-paced scound-

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 412 and footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 343.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. I., footnote to p. 280.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I pp. 327-328 and footnote.

<sup>6</sup> *History of Piracy*, 1932, p. 244.



rel named James Plantain, the friend of Mulatto Tom, who was a natural son of the pirate Avery.

Kidd and Avery had both appeared off the Malabar coast at the end of the seventeenth century. The latter, known as the Grand Pirate, by successfully attacking the Mecca fleet of the empire, had caused serious complications between the East India Company and the Mogul government.<sup>1</sup>

It was some time before the East India Company learnt the lesson that the same ship could not reasonably be expected to carry cargo and fight fast piratical craft; and succeeding members of the Angria family continued with the connivance of the Peshwa's government to be the terror of the coast until 1750, when Tulaji Angria disavowed the authority of Poona. This brought down upon him in 1755 a combined attack by the Marathas and a small British squadron under Commodore James to whose resolute tactics the fall of Suvarndrug was due. A year later a British fleet of twelve warships under Admiral Watson and a force of 800 European and 600 Indian infantry commanded by Clive, then a colonel, co-operating with the Marathas, took Gheria.<sup>2</sup> Tulaji was captured and imprisoned for life. But piracy on the Malabar coast was not finally stamped out by the British until 1820.<sup>3</sup>

Balaji Visvanath died in 1720 and the office became hereditary when he was succeeded as Peshwa by his eldest son Baji Rao. Bred a soldier as well as a statesman, Baji Rao united the enterprise, vigour and hardihood of a Maratha chief with the polished manners and great ability which frequently distinguish the Brahmans of the Konkan. In the second Peshwa industry and close attention to detail were combined with acute political insight. He had both the head to plan and the hand to execute in his sovereign's name his schemes for the expansion of the Maratha power.<sup>4</sup> While Shahu allowed himself to become, what his successors remained, an ornamental figure-head at Satara,

*Rise of the  
Peshwas.*

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 280, footnote, pp. 288-289 and footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 478-485.

<sup>3</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 382.

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 359.

the chief minister Sripot Rao was not so complacent, and struggled for a time to uphold the royal authority. But Baji Rao overcame all opposition, and the most important personages in India, until Dupleix became governor of Pondicherry in 1742, were the Peshwa at Satara,<sup>1</sup> the Nizam at Hyderabad and the Governor of Bengal at Murshidabad.

The Nizam, although at times in alliance with the Marathas, had every inducement to check their growing power and never-ending encroachments. The blackmail which they levied on the Deccan, for the *chauth* was nothing else, was sanctioned on the condition that promiscuous raiding should cease, and this condition was being ignored. The Nizam tried to weaken the Marathas by reviving their old hereditary disputes, but he only strengthened the Peshwa's position and drew the Maratha people more closely together.<sup>2</sup> Active hostilities were equally unsuccessful; he failed to take Poona and his own capital was threatened.

In 1731 the Nizam made a remarkably astute move. He signed a secret compact with the Peshwa by which he was left undisturbed in the Deccan, while the Marathas were given a free hand with respect to the territory still under Mogul suzerainty further north.<sup>3</sup> The Nizam thus averted the danger threatening himself and directed it towards the Rajput States. Nor was this all. Had the Marathas, instead of overrunning these principalities to levy tribute by force of arms, united with the Rajput chiefs of Rajputana and Central India a powerful Hindu alliance might have swept Moslem rule out of India.

The Peshwa Baji Rao established a footing in Malwa in 1734, but two years later he found that, notwithstanding the tribute levied from the foreign districts, the upkeep of the vast army necessary to support his policy was more than the revenue could stand, his troops were in arrears of pay and his finances heavily involved. His demands upon the imperial provinces became even more extravagant and insistent, and in 1736 he made an attempt to extort the Emperor's agreement to them by a demonstration of force. The Peshwa was, however, obliged to retreat from the neighbourhood of Delhi, and a year later

<sup>1</sup> Poona did not become the Maratha seat of government until 1750.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. pp. 368-370.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I p. 377

Muhammad Shah offered the Nizam Malwa and Gujarat if he would drive the Marathas out of these provinces. The Nizam, seriously alarmed by the ever-increasing power of his allies, readily agreed, and moved south from Delhi with 34,000 Mogul and Hindu troops supported by what was considered the most efficient artillery in India.<sup>1</sup>

Baji Rao concentrated all his available forces and crossed the Narbada with 80,000 men in January 1738. The armies met near Bhopal, and the Marathas at once took the initiative forcing the Nizam to fall back on Seronji. Here he was practically surrounded, and within six weeks of the opening of the campaign he signed a convention giving the Peshwa the whole of Malwa, the absolute sovereignty of the country between the Narbada and the Chambal and an indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees,<sup>2</sup> equivalent to £500,000 sterling. Baji Rao remained south of the Chambal levying contributions and negotiating for the imperial ratification of the treaty, while the Nizam returned to Delhi, upon which a fearful disaster was about to fall.

Nadir Quli, a Turkman of a poor family in Khurasan, had freed Persia from its seven terrible years of subjection to the Afghans by his genius as a soldier and his skilful diplomacy, and Shah Tahmasp in gratitude had given to the hero of the Persian people literally half of his kingdom. A few years later Tahmasp was deposed, and Nadir became Regent to his infant son. But the boy died when four years old, and Nadir became King of Persia in 1736 to begin a career of conquest from the Caspian to Kandahar. In 1738 Nadir Shah, then in his fiftieth year, turned towards India and invaded Mogul Afghanistan. Muhammad Shah and his advisers had, in spite of repeated warnings, for years neglected the province and stinted it of money. The administration had fallen to pieces, the troops were "ill-fed, ill-equipped and ill-armed through poverty," and Kabul fell after a five weeks' campaign in the third week of June.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II. p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 399.

Making use of the diplomatic pretexts which the inept and casual Delhi government presented to him, Nadir Shah moved forward to invade India and passed through Jalalabad on the 12th November 1738. Peshawar was occupied without opposition six days later, and Lahore surrendered early in January 1739. Nadir Shah's invading army, with its cavalry screen 30 or 40 miles in advance of the main body, spread ruin and disorder throughout the Punjab, while the lawless elements in the country, freed from all restraint, took to plunder and pillage; "the whole province was in complete revolution."

The Mogul government had not moved a man to protect the frontier when the ominous news of the loss of Kabul reached Delhi in the first week of July 1738; nor were any military preparations made for two months after Nadir Shah came through the Khyber in mid-November. But the occupation of Lahore thoroughly alarmed the court and frantic appeals for help were made to the Nizam, to the Rajputs and even to Baji Rao. The Marathas contented themselves with preparations to defend the line of the Narbada; the Rajput chiefs, hopelessly alienated since the time of Aurangzeb and with the prospect of independence before them, ignored the summons; and the Emperor, influenced by the jealousy and suspicion of the Hindustani party, would not give the Nizam, who had come to Delhi with a small contingent, supreme command of the army.

After more inexcusable delay the imperial troops, which possibly numbered 75,000, including the reinforcements brought by Saadat Khan, Governor of Oudh, began their advance and reached Karnal at the end of January 1739. Here they entrenched themselves in a camp said to have been 12 miles in circumference and awaited the enemy. The size of the camp is explained by Irvine.<sup>1</sup> After pointing out that Lord Lake's camp, during his operations in the same area (1804-06) contained 300,000 souls, of whom only 30,000 were soldiers, he goes on to say: "As the Emperor himself with his harem and the luxurious grandees with their families were present, we shall not be wrong in estimating the population in the camp at Karnal at a million."

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II. pp 338-339.

## LATER MOGULS AND MARATHAS

Nadir Shah reached Karnal with a striking force of about 55,000 men. The remainder of his army of 80,000 had been detached to guard his long line of communications. On the following morning, the 13th February 1739, the Mogul army moved out from its entrenchments to the attack. The Persian army consisted of cavalry, mostly equipped with fire-arms, and a camel corps of swivel guns. The Indian forces with their almost immobile artillery, their field guns mounted on elephants, their neglect of musketry and their reliance on the shock tactics of their heavy cavalry, were mown down by the rapid fire and well-controlled volleys of the invaders. Muhammad Shah was totally defeated in less than three hours, and the imperial field treasury, guns, elephants and baggage all fell into the hands of the victors.

After the battle the Nizam, "the key of the State of India," was sent to open peace negotiations; and on the 7th March the Persian king and Muhammad Shah entered Delhi together to settle the terms of the indemnity.

But while the negotiations were going on a disturbance broke out in the city in which some Persian military police were attacked. The mob got out of hand, killing a number of Persian soldiers, and on the morning of the 11th March Nadir Shah put the town wards in which the outbreak had occurred to the sword for five hours. Then he yielded to the prayers of Muhammad Shah and gave orders for the massacre to cease, an order which his disciplined troops are said to have immediately obeyed. The number of people killed in Delhi is estimated by Irvine at 20,000.

In this connexion, and as a contrast to modern conditions, a footnote to p. 93 of Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs* is of interest: "The defeat of the Delhi sovereign and Nadir's entry into the capital . . . were not known in London until the 1st October, so slow were communications and of so little importance was Delhi to Englishmen" at that time.

Nadir Shah stayed in the capital for about two months engaged in raising the huge indemnity from the Emperor, the nobles and the general public, which enabled him to remit the entire revenue of Persia for three years, in addition to making a lavish award of prize-

money to his troops. Muhammad Shah had to cede to Persia the country west of the Indus "from Kashmir to Sind," and when Nadir Shah left Delhi on the 5th May 1739<sup>1</sup> he took the Koh-i-noor diamond and the peacock throne away with him. Eight years later Nadir Shah was assassinated, his treasures were plundered and dispersed and with them the Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan.

Timur's invasion of India at the end of the fourteenth century had brought desolation and appalling suffering upon the country from the north-western passes to Delhi, but it did not result in dismemberment. The viceroy whom he left in the Punjab and Upper Sind kept order in these provinces and eventually founded the Sayyid line of Delhi Kings. But Nadir Shah, when he annexed Afghanistan and the trans-Indus provinces, deprived India of her natural defensive frontier on the west and laid her open to renewed attack. As Sir Jadunath Sarkar has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> Timur's destructive work and the threat of further invasion from his country ended with his life. But the Abdali and his dynasty continued Nadir's work in India as the heir to his empire. With the Khyber Pass and the Peshawar district in foreign hands, the Punjab became a starting-point for fresh expeditions against Delhi.

When Nadir Shah entered India, the Punjab, then under an efficient local administration, was peaceful and prosperous. When he left it orderly rule had been exchanged for utter desolation, banditry and anarchy. The Punjab in its state of chaos had passed out of Mogul control more than twelve years before Ahmad Shah Durrani took formal possession of it in 1752.<sup>3</sup> During the invasion of Nadir Shah the Sikhs collected in small bands and impartially plundered their wealthier fellow-countrymen and stragglers of the Persian army. Growing in boldness and strength they began systematically to levy contributions, and to raid farther and farther eastward, plundering, burning and massacring wherever they went.

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Mughals*, Vol. II. p. 375 (authority: Hanway).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. II. p. 377, in the concluding editorial chapter of Irvine's work.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 96.

## LATER MOGULS AND MARATHAS

To the east of Delhi the unruly Afghan colonists of Rohilkhand raised themselves by insurrection and hard fighting to considerable importance, although they were not strong enough to resist the Maratha inroads. Rohilkhand was originally the Hindu provinces of Katehr and Sambhala which were colonised in the seventeenth century by Pathans mostly of the Yusufzai tribe, who built Shahjahanpur. The name Rohilkhand is derived from the Afghan *roh*, mountainous, and *ela*, the Hindu word for "a person belonging to a group," Rohilkhand being the district they inhabited.

In the provinces of the empire to the south of Delhi the Marathas were now established in absolute security and, with the central government entirely powerless, their marauding expeditions began to penetrate repeatedly to Orissa, south-eastern Bihar and Bengal.

Muhammad Shah and his ministers were utterly incompetent and worse. The Nizam was the only able and straightforward statesman left to advise the Emperor, but he was now a very old man, and he was tied to the Deccan where rebellion had broken out among his sons in anticipation of his death. For the Mogul empire no vestige of hope remained.

In 1748 Muhammad Shah and the Nizam both died. The Emperor was succeeded by his son Ahmad Shah, who made Safdar Jang (Nawab of Oudh) his chief minister, and the long-standing rivalry began between the rulers of Oudh and of the Deccan for this office.

The government of Delhi had become a negligible factor, but a first-class Asiatic power had arisen in the kingdom of Afghanistan. When Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747 Persia was plunged into a state of confusion which lasted fifty years. Ahmad Shah of the Abdali tribe secured control of Afghanistan in 1747 and made the Afghans into the nation which is still ruled by the Durrani dynasty he founded. In the course of his campaigns, which set his frontiers upon the Oxus to the north and almost to the shores of the Caspian to the west, Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India seven times, and soon forced the Mogul government, paralysed by civil war, to cede the Punjab formally to him.

Ahmad Shah of Delhi was deposed and blinded by his chief

minister Ghazi ud-din, grandson of the first Nizam, in 1754, and was replaced by another Timurid, Alamgir II. Two years later Ahmad Shah Durrani made his third expedition into India. Delhi was sacked and again given over to the horrors of massacre. The Afghan king returned to his own country in 1757, leaving a nominee of his own, the able Delhi noble Najib-ud-daula, as chief minister, while he appointed his own viceroy in the Punjab to keep the road open from Afghanistan.

India at this period was in a state of almost complete chaos and anarchy. The whole country was torn in pieces. The provinces and viceroyalties of the old Mogul Empire had been parcelled out, as Sir Alfred Lyall describes it,<sup>1</sup> "among revolted governors, rebellious chiefs, leaders of insurgent tribes or sects, religious revivalists, or captains of mercenary bands. The Indian people were becoming a masterless multitude swaying to and fro in the political storm, and clinging to any power, natural or supernatural, that seemed likely to protect them. They were prepared to acquiesce in the assumption of authority by anyone who could show himself able to discharge the most elementary functions of government in the preservation of life and property."

The Sikhs had taken the opportunity offered to them by Afghan invasion to rise. Between 1756 and 1758 they were strong enough to occupy Lahore where, under Jassa Singh, a carpenter, they used the Mogul mint to strike rupees with the inscription: "Coined by the grace of the Khalsa in the country of Ahmad, conquered by Jassa the Kalal."<sup>2</sup>

There was no organized and settled government in the north, and the Marathas resolved to make a supreme effort to establish their supremacy over all India. They had isolated the Mogul possessions in the Deccan and had every hope of eventually overwhelming them. The future appeared to hold for the Marathas the promise of spreading Hindu authority and preserving Brahman ascendancy throughout the length

*The Maratha bid  
for Supremacy.*

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India.*

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, Cunningham, Edn 1918, p. 98.



and breadth of the great Empire where their co-religionists had for many centuries been a conquered people in their native land.

But the Confederacy had been founded on the unstable basis of self-interest and was fed upon plunder. In the time of Baji Rao the Maratha government had refused the opportunity to ally itself to the Rajput States and so present a united Hindu front to the Moslem powers; and the campaigning methods of the Marathas were calculated to arouse the hostility of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup> In their own homes, tilling their fields and quietly enjoying their hereditary rights, the Marathas have always been distinguished for their kindliness, their hospitality, their high moral standards and their uncomplaining courage in adversity. But, as Grant Duff has observed, "the extension of [the Maratha] sway, carried no freedom even to Hindus, except freedom of opinion; and it rarely brought protection or improved the habits and conditions of the vanquished. Destruction, rapine, oppression and tyranny were their more certain concomitants; and although entitled to the negative praise of not being blood-thirsty, they were unfeeling and ungenerous victors."

*Invasion of the Punjab.* The Maratha Confederacy had been under the lethargic leadership of Balaji Baji Rao since the death of his father Baji Rao, the second Peshwa, in 1740, while the administration was in the hands of his cousin Sadasheo Bhao, with Raghunath Rao as the principal general. In 1758, reinforced by the federal contingents of Holkar and Sindia, Raghunath Rao advanced into Northern India. Delhi was taken and Najib-ud-daula expelled; Lahore was occupied and Ahmad Shah's viceroy driven out; and a Maratha administration was set up in the Punjab. These successes were to mark the highest point of Maratha achievement. In the words of Grant Duff, "their right to tribute was acknowledged on the banks of the Coleroon, and the Deccan horse had quenched their thirst from the waters of the Indus."

This sudden and dramatic Maratha success thoroughly alarmed the Moslem rulers of the north, and provoked in Ahmad Shah

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. p. 516.

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Durrani the only great Asiatic soldier who appeared in India during the eighteenth century. A Moslem league was formed by Najib-ud-daula, and in the winter of 1759-60 the Afghan king came through the north-western passes to open the campaign. The Marathas were far from their base, their forces were overwhelmed in succession, and Ahmad Shah after reoccupying Lahore swept the confederate troops out of Northern India.

The Peshwa collected every available man, and the Maratha forces concentrated south of the Chambal under the nominal command of Balaji's young son Viswas Rao, with Sadasheo Bhao as the actual leader. The army which was to renew the invasion of Northern India and make a final bid for Maratha supremacy is estimated by Elphinstone to have amounted to 300,000 men, but these included the usual swarm of camp followers. The backbone of the army, a picked force trained on French lines under the command of Ibrahim Gardi Khan, consisted of 2000 cavalry, 9000 infantry with matchlocks, and 40 guns. The main body was made up of 58,000 Maratha horse, 2000 Rajput cavalry, about 5000 inferior infantry, 200 heavy guns, a number of rocket batteries, thousands of roving freebooters, known in Indian history as *Pindaris*, and a horde of bandits.<sup>1</sup>

Ghazi-ud-din had murdered Alamgir II while the Afghan army was on the march into India, and the young Emperor Shah Alam, who was recognized by Ahmad Shah Durrani, was absent in Bengal trying to make an alliance with the new masters of that province, the East India Company. The Muhammadan defence against the Maratha invasion lay in the hands of Ahmad Shah Durrani and his Afghan army supported by contingents of Indian Moslems.

Ahmad Shah's army, according to Kasi Raja Pundit, who was present at the battle and examined the Shah's muster-rolls, consisted of 41,800 cavalry, 38,000 infantry, including the Afghan musketeers and camel gunners, about 70 guns and a large number of irregulars.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. I pp. 517, 518 with footnote, 521, 522; and the account written in 1808 by Saiyid Ghulam Ali, *Elliot and Dowson*, Vol. VIII. p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. I. p. 521; and *Oxford History of India*, p. 464.

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The campaign of 1760 began with the occupation of Delhi by the Marathas, who at once opened negotiations with the Afghans. But Ahmad Shah was in no mood to make peace. In his opinion "the Marathas are the thorn of Hindustan, and by one effort we can get this thorn out of our sides for ever." The desultory skirmishing which followed was deliberately prolonged by the Afghan commander to reduce the Maratha supplies, and by the beginning of the new year the confederate army was on the verge of starvation within its entrenchments at Panipat.

On the 7th January 1761, just before daybreak, the Maratha army left its lines and formed up for battle some little way from the Afghan camp, with Ibrahim Gardi Khan on the left flank, Sindia on the right of the line, and the artillery, according to the tactical dispositions of the time, in advance of the centre. Here they halted and watched the deployment of Ahmad Shah's forces. The engagement began with a furious charge of the Maratha horse upon the Muhammadan centre, and the Afghan cavalry caught at the halt were ridden over and gave way, to be rallied with the greatest difficulty. Ahmad Shah then brought up his reserves and early in the afternoon delivered a strong counter-attack which decided the day. Viswas Rao was mortally wounded and the Maratha army broke into utter rout. Sadasheo Bhao did not survive his defeat though his actual fate is uncertain, and Ibrahim Gardi Khan died of his wounds, a prisoner.<sup>1</sup>

The victorious Afghans showed no mercy to the vanquished. Sindia, who was wounded and taken prisoner, was beheaded, and the number of Hindus killed in action or butchered as prisoners was estimated at nearly 200,000. The Peshwa Balaji Rao, crossing the Nerbada with reinforcements, was met by a messenger with a letter from the field, which gave the fatal news: "Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up." The Peshwa never recovered from the shock of the disaster, and he returned to Poona to die six months afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone's *History of India*; an almost identical account is given in the *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. I. pp. 524-529.

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Panipat was the greatest battle which had been fought for two centuries between Hindus and Moslems, but its results were quite disproportionate to its magnitude. Babar, when he defeated Ibrahim Lodi in 1526, and Akbar by the destruction of Hemu's army thirty years later, successively established and secured an empire by their victories. But Ahmad Shah, the victor of the third battle of Panipat, gained nothing by his exploit. His troops, who were suffering heavily from disease and who had drawn no pay for two years, became mutinous and insisted on a return to the highlands of Afghanistan, and Ahmad Shah was obliged to retire from India. He left Najib-ud-daula in authority at Delhi and appointed deputies in Sirhind and Lahore, who had considerable trouble with the Sikhs.<sup>1</sup> The Afghan hold on the northern provinces gradually relaxed and the Punjab relapsed into a state of confusion from which it was not restored until the rise of Ranjit Singh at the beginning of the next century.

On the other hand the consequences of the battle were widely felt in India. The Marathas were still the most formidable power in the country in spite of the heavy defeat which swept them for a time out of the north. But Panipat was the death blow to the great confederacy. As Elphinstone<sup>2</sup> has pointed out, "The history of the Mogul Empire closed of itself with that battle and the confederacy of the Maratha princes dissolved when this, their common danger, completely disappeared." Dissensions soon broke out after the death of Balaji Baji Rao, and the government of the Peshwa never regained its vigour. Most of the Maratha conquests were recovered later, but it was by independent chiefs with the help of European officers and trained State troops.

The years 1757 to 1761 were fateful in Indian history. Ahmad Shah, when he retired from India after Panipat, practically closed the line of conquering invaders from Central Asia, and the Maratha confederacy failed disastrously in the bid for supremacy, although its princes had not been crushed.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 100-104.

<sup>2</sup> *History of India*, p. 573 (5th Edn.).

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The destinies of India lay neither with Kabul nor with Poona. But in the east a new and still reluctant authority was taking shape. In 1757 Clive made the East India Company the virtual controllers of Bengal, as the result of Plassey, a power which was manifested by the deposition of the Nawab Mir Jafar in 1760 and the temporary setting up by the Company of Mir Kasim in his place; while on the 14th January 1761, a week after Panipat, the Comte de Lally-Tollendal, representative of France in India, surrendered Pondicherry to the English.

The new era, which opened between the years 1757 and 1761, had its origin in the Carnatic, and the series of events which ultimately led to the establishment of British supremacy are described in the following chapters.

NOTE.—The chronology of events of this period is given at the end of Chapter XIV.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### French and English in the Carnatic

THE Carnatic was the most important of the principalities within the suzerainty of the Nizam, who was virtually an independent sovereign in the Deccan after 1724. It lay between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal, and extended from the Kistna River south to the Maratha State of Tanjore and the little kingdom of Trichinopoly. On the Carnatic coast stood the three cities of the leading European trading companies, English Madras, French Pondicherry, and Dutch Negapatam. The seat of the provincial government was at Arcot, and the Nizam's deputy, or nawab, who administered it in 1736, was Dost Ali, usually referred to as the Nawab of Arcot.

Ambitious to convert his official appointment as deputy into a hereditary sovereignty, the Nawab determined to extend the territory he governed, and the small States of Trichinopoly and Tanjore seemed an easy prey. In 1736-37 the Nawab's son Safdar Ali and his son-in-law Husain Dost Khan, who is generally known as Chanda Sahib, conquered Trichinopoly, then being ruled by a Hindu princess, the widow of the last Nayak representative of the ancient kingdom of Vijayanagar. Chanda Sahib, who now became its first Moslem governor, combined bold leadership in war with remarkable astuteness in politics. He had a great admiration for the French, whose language he spoke, and in 1739, although his troops had been unable to conquer the Maratha State of Tanjore, he took Karikal and handed it over to the *Compagnie des Indes*.

A year later 50,000 Maratha horse made an incursion into the Carnatic, where they had not been seen for a generation, on the ever-convenient pretext of levying the *chauth*, but probably in

reprisal for the Moslem depredations in Tanjore territory. Descending upon the country by an unfrequented route they surprised the Carnatic army in the Dalmacherri Pass, and the Nawab of Arcot was defeated and killed. Safdar Ali then came to terms with the Marathas, buying them off by the payment of a heavy indemnity and making at the same time a secret compact<sup>1</sup> by which the Marathas agreed to crush Chanda Sahib whom his brother-in-law considered too powerful. Trichinopoly was besieged and taken by the Marathas in 1741, and Chanda Sahib was sent a prisoner to Satara.

During the siege the Maratha commander wrote to Dumas, Governor of Pondicherry, demanding the surrender of Chanda Sahib's wife, family, jewels and elephants which had been sent there for safety, with the alternative that the Marathas would take them by force and levy forty years' arrears of *chauth* upon the settlement. Dumas sent back the answer: "The wife of Chanda Sahib is in Pondicherry under the protection of the King of France, my master, and all the Frenchmen in India would die rather than deliver her to you." The Marathas decided that Pondicherry was too strong to assault, and the resolute attitude of Dumas greatly increased the prestige of the French among the Indian princes, and this prestige his successor Dupleix inherited.<sup>2</sup>

Safdar Ali was murdered by a relative in 1742 and his young son, who had been left with the English at Madras for safety, was locally recognized as Nawab and the government was carried on by the Carnatic ministers. These disorders had, however, attracted the attention of the Nizam and, old though he was, he came down in 1743 to the Carnatic with an army of 80,000 men to settle the affairs of the province. He reached Arcot in March, just two months before Robert Clive, about to begin his Indian career as a writer at Fort St. George, sailed from the Thames in the company's ship *Winchester*.<sup>3</sup> The state of anarchy prevailing in the province is illustrated by the Nizam's remark to his guards at his first levee:

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I. pp. 420, 421

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. I. pp. 96, 97

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Forrest, Vol. I. p. 8.

"I have seen this day eighteen nawabs in a country where there should be but one; scourge the next fellow who comes with that title."<sup>1</sup>

The Nizam expelled the Maratha garrison from Trichinopoly, appointed an old servant of his, Anwar-ud-din, to administer the government of Arcot, and then went back to Hyderabad. Shortly afterwards the boy Nawab was murdered. The Nizam recognized Anwar-ud-din as his successor, but the new Nawab, surrounded by members of the displaced and highly popular family, who still held the majority of the chief fortresses and *jagirs*, found his position insecure. The political outlook was most uncertain when (in 1742) a master of Oriental diplomacy came to Pondicherry in the person of Joseph Dupleix, to succeed Dumas as Governor and *ex officio* Director-General of the French Trading Company's interests in India. Dupleix had been promoted from chief of the factory at Chandernagore, which he had raised from an insignificant village on the Hooghly to a flourishing colony.

By this time the relative positions of the European trading companies had simplified into a commercial rivalry between the French and the English. Portuguese power and prosperity had long disappeared. The Dutch, who had ousted the Portuguese, had been so weakened by their war with France that Great Britain found herself relieved of her most formidable rival at sea, and the Dutch Company began to lose its hold in India and to concentrate upon its valuable interests in Ceylon, Java, Borneo and the Spice Islands. The Danish East India Company, which only existed upon the profits of the carrying trade between India and the Malay Archipelago, had neither money nor influence. A new European competitor had appeared in 1722, when the Austrian-Netherland Company was started at Ostend, with wide military and political powers set forth in its charter. But between the protests of Great Britain, France and Holland in Europe and the eventual hostility of the Indian local authorities, the precarious existence of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. I. p. 100.



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new-comer came to an end in 1744, and its factory at Bankipore was abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

France was greatly exhausted by the wars which ended in 1713, but the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, during the thirty years of peace which followed, made a wonderful recovery from the days of the embarrassed successors of François Martin. This was the more remarkable as they were severely handicapped by their home government. The despotic bureaucracy of France persisted in the policy, when anything seemed to be wrong with their company, of appointing special commissioners, notwithstanding the company's protests that all their misfortunes were due to over-interference. The Company was usually heavily in debt to the French government, and its financial aids, apart from grants made by the Treasury, were lottery privileges and tobacco monopolies.

But the Edict of 1719 had given backbone to the *Compagnie des Indes*, the free-trade policy of Law, the Scottish minister of France had greatly encouraged oversea commerce, and the pacifism of the old cardinal and statesman Fleuri, whose administration in France paralleled that of Walpole in England, had helped this revival. As early as 1715 the French company had taken possession of the island of Mauritius (Isle de France), which the Dutch had abandoned, and in the islands of Bourbon and France they consequently possessed a connecting link between the now flourishing trade centres in India and the prosperous Breton depot of l'Orient. Bourbon was a rich agricultural colony, and as it was impossible to equip ships anywhere on the harbourless Coromandel coast, the governor of the islands, Admiral Mahé de la Bourdonnais,<sup>2</sup> had, by 1740, converted Port Louis in the Isle of France into a fortified well-found naval base from which the Indian Ocean could be controlled.<sup>3</sup> De la Bourdonnais had brought from Europe a small squadron (which was soon withdrawn) to operate against the English trade

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> The French possession of Mahé in India and the island of Mahé (Seychelles) are named after him.

<sup>3</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan (5th Edn.), pp. 242-243, 273.

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in the event of war. But when hostilities opened the French had no men-of-war in Indian waters. The military position in India was also far from satisfactory, for Dupleix found on his arrival at Pondicherry that its fortifications were incomplete, its European garrison numbered less than 450, and the home authorities vetoed the new governor's scheme for military reorganization. Dupleix nevertheless strengthened the defences.

The relations between the East India Company and the British Government were in striking contrast to the situation of the French. Far from being in debt to the Treasury, the English company made annual loans to the Government in aid of war expenses and trusted to their influence in Parliament when dealing with the Crown. Unhampered by interference in their affairs, the responsibility thrown upon their chiefs produced in time a body of capable and experienced administrators, guided by long tradition in the Asiatic trade and with a large reserve of capital behind them.

In 1732 the company first began to make up regular accounts, and from this date it is possible to trace the fluctuations of their trade.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the forward policy urged by Sir Josia Child half a century earlier, and regardless of the crisis which arose in 1740 when war between France and Britain seemed imminent, the English Company were content to remain in an even weaker military position than the French. The three Presidencies were entirely independent of each other and responsible only to the Court of Directors in London, Surman's embassy of 1717 to the Mogul court having been the solitary instance of combined action. The company's insignificant military establishments were altogether separate, and there was no unity of command. Nor had the British Admiralty any ships upon the Indian station.

By the year 1744 there were in the company's territory of Madras 250,000 inhabitants nearly all of whom were Indians and, according

<sup>1</sup> Tables of exports, imports, duties, etc., are given by Hamilton in *Trade Relations between England and India*, Appendix.

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to Orme,<sup>1</sup> the town had risen "to a degree of opulence and reputation which rendered it inferior to none of the European establishments in India except Goa and Batavia." There were about a hundred English civilians in Madras and a European garrison two hundred strong. With the exception of two or three officers none of the troops had seen active service, and they were commanded by an elderly and incompetent Swede who had risen from the ranks. There were hardly any military stores and the fortifications were inadequate.<sup>2</sup>

This was the position of the rival trading companies in the Carnatic when France joined Spain against Great Britain in 1744 in the War of the Austrian Succession. The French had in Dupleix and de la Bourdonnais two representatives to whom no rivals in ability and force of character had as yet appeared among the English officials in India, and had they worked cordially together they might have ruined at least temporarily the English settlements in India.<sup>3</sup> But their views were diametrically opposed, and quarrels took the place of co-operation.

The utter confusion and lack of settled government in India taken in conjunction with the rapid expansion of the Western Powers throughout the world made a European conquest of the country seem only a question of time. Dupleix made up his mind that France should become the suzerain power of an Indian empire of vassal princes; and resolved to bring this about by his own manipulation of Indian politics and alliances as the head of a foreign and independent colony, and by becoming a vassal of the Mogul Emperor and using that position as a lever. But in the first place the English company had to be driven out. Dupleix had grasped with unerring insight two of the main factors in Indian politics, the utter weakness of the apparent suzerainty of the Empire, and the certainty of eventual European supremacy. But he neglected the overriding influence of sea-power.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, Vol. I. (4th Edn. 1861), pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. pp. 19, 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 258.

*Influence of Sea-power.* De la Bourdonnais, whose greatest chance had actually come and gone between 1740, when he was in France trying to raise a fleet, and 1742, when the squadron allotted to him was recalled, aimed at naval supremacy in Eastern waters, and a dominion based, not on the shifting foundations of Indian alliances but upon free and certain communication with the home country.<sup>1</sup> This was, in fact, the essential condition upon which a maritime European power could establish its territorial supremacy in India; and without it the ambitious schemes of Dupleix were doomed to failure. Had it not been for the constant diversion of French policy from the sea to projects of continental expansion this naval superiority was not, even then, unattainable, considering the relative strength of the two navies,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that Great Britain was already at war with Spain. But from 1726 to 1760 the French Government steadily disregarded her maritime interests. Her navy weakened into decay until her commerce and overseas possessions lay at the mercy of Britain when war came, and France had eventually to surrender what Dupleix had actually gained for her, the extent and population of an empire.<sup>3</sup>

The influence of sea-power upon the history of India began when the Portuguese secured the trade monopoly of the Eastern seas by the strength of their fleet, while the Mogul empire destitute of a navy was unable to keep its coast inviolate. It became the decisive factor in the middle of the eighteenth century.

When war broke out in 1744 between Great Britain and France Dupleix made an effort to preserve neutrality in India. But the English company could give no guarantee binding the British Government or the Royal Navy; and in July 1745 a British squadron, which had already taken the French company's China fleet, appeared off Pondicherry. Preparations were made to besiege the place, but the Nawab of the Carnatic, Anwar-ud-din, informed the Madras Government that he would permit no hostilities within his terri-

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> See Note at end of this Chapter.

<sup>3</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, pp. 29, 74, 226, 282.

tories by the English, or by the French if they became the stronger,<sup>1</sup> and the operations were suspended.

In the following year de la Bourdonnais appeared off the Coromandel coast with an improvised squadron of eight ships, and on 25th June fell in with Peyton's four men-of-war, which could, however, out-range and out-sail the French. The action was indecisive, but the British commodore by making for the Hooghly and staying there until reinforcements arrived laid Madras open to attack by the French. De la Bourdonnais with no enemy squadron to face was able to land 2000 Europeans from his ships early in September, and after a two days' bombardment Madras and Fort St. George surrendered on 20th-21st September 1746.<sup>2</sup> The French had suffered no casualties and only four or five Englishmen were killed.<sup>3</sup>

Anwar-ud-din had despatched 10,000 cavalry to enforce his orders as to neutrality when his remonstrances to the French were ignored, but they arrived to find the French flag flying over Madras. The Nawab's troops laid siege to the place in their turn but the French defeated and dispersed them. The accounts of the action do not tally,<sup>4</sup> but as the result a small number of French soldiers defeated a whole army. The superiority of Western field artillery, fire control and discipline over the shock tactics of Indian armies was now evident, and this fact had far-reaching political and military consequences.

The terms by which Madras was to be restored to the English company after three months on payment of a ransom renewed the quarrel between the French leaders, Dupleix maintaining that the promise to hand back Madras was outside the Admiral's power. De la Bourdonnais had dealt a serious blow to British prestige, but shortly afterwards a hurricane shattered his fleet and he returned to France to be imprisoned in the Bastille for refusing to co-operate energetically in the extirpation of the English settlements. Dupleix

<sup>1</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I pp. 47-49.

denounced the treaty made with the English Company and, having originally told the Nawab that Madras was being conquered to be handed over to him, kept the town as a French possession.

De la Bourdonnais had left behind him 1200 well-disciplined men who were of the greatest value to Dupleix in his future operations, as this brought the Pondicherry force up to 3000 Europeans.<sup>1</sup> But with the departure of the admiral the command of the sea was lost to the French. Griffin had arrived in place of Peyton, and the new British commodore persistently interfered with the efforts of the French to take Fort St. David, a few miles south of Pondicherry. Until the Nawab was persuaded that the English cause was hopeless, Dupleix had also to contend with the Carnatic troops, and the siege of Fort St. David, although its fortifications were on a par with those of Madras, went on intermittently and unsuccessfully for eighteen months.

But the siege of Fort St. David is memorable for more than its resolute defence by 200 Europeans, 100 Indo-Portuguese and Indian levies armed chiefly with swords and spears.<sup>2</sup> On the 16th March 1747, John Hinde, "Deputy Governor of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies," appointed Robert Clive ensign of the Second Company of Foot Soldiers at Fort St. David. Clive had escaped from Madras after the capitulation disguised as an Indian interpreter to avoid giving his parole not to fight the French. Offered his choice between a writership and "acting in a Military Sphere (though then at a very low Ebb)," he decided that the latter "was the most honourable of the two and most conducive to the Company's Interest."<sup>3</sup> Clive was not quite twenty-two. The Court of Directors, commenting upon his appointment, remarked, "Be sure to encourage Ensign Clive in his martial

<sup>1</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Original garrison. When Major Stringer Lawrence took over command in January 1748, 100 Europeans from Bombay, 150 recruits from England, 200 Topasses and 500 Indian infantry had arrived to reinforce it. Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I p. 87. Topasses were Goanese soldiers of mixed descent.

<sup>3</sup> India Office Records, *Miscellaneous Letters*, Vol. 38, No. 120 (b), letter under date 8th March 1755.

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pursuits, according to his merit: any improvement he shall make therein shall be duly regarded by us." <sup>1</sup> Ten years later at Plassey, Clive, already the hero of Arcot, gained the practical control of Bengal for the company and so laid the foundation of the British Empire in India.

One other event was to be a landmark in the development of British power in India. The Court of Directors established the first link between the three independent Presidencies by the re-organization of their combatant forces. One company of artillery was formed in each Presidency and a C.R.A. appointed to command the three units.<sup>2</sup> This was reinforced by a step of greater importance. Major Stringer Lawrence, an officer of Clayton's regiment <sup>3</sup> who had seen service at Fontenoy and Culloden, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the company's forces in India, and landed at Fort St. David on 1st January 1748.<sup>4</sup> It was Lawrence who instructed the military genius of Clive in the earliest stage of his career; and, from the day the "father of the Indian army" took command, the company's troops rapidly became more efficient. The military establishment, which was entirely separate from the Royal troops, who began to come to India six years later, was both European and Indian. The European units, which were mostly British but included adventurers from almost every country in Europe, were organized in companies, except in Bombay where the battalion system was followed. The Indian troops in 1748 approximated to a body of armed police, commanded by their fellow-countrymen, Indian gentlemen of good birth and position.<sup>5</sup>

The arrival of Admiral Boscawen at Fort St David at the end of July 1748 with the strongest fleet which had ever been seen in the Indian seas,<sup>6</sup> and with about one thousand infantry on board, altered the situation. The Admiral carried the king's commission as

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution of the Army in India*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Later the 14th Foot and now the West Yorkshire Regiment.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> *Evolution of the Army in India*, pp. 7, 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 277.

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General and Commander-in-Chief of the land forces in India, although he knew nothing of land operations, and he superseded the able and experienced soldier, Major Lawrence. The reinforcements from England consisted of drafts from different regiments and Scottish Jacobites pardoned on condition of enlistment, together with deserters and criminals released from jail.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided to open the campaign by besieging Pondicherry before the Raja of Tanjore could come to the help of the French. The siege operations were mismanaged and the bombardment by the fleet was ineffective. Dupleix, after his able engineer Paradis was killed, inspired the skilful and vigorous defence, and at the beginning of October the siege was abandoned and the combined forces returned to Fort St. David.<sup>2</sup> It was a conspicuous success for Dupleix and a conspicuous failure for the British.

Before a second attempt could be made to take Pondicherry the news reached India that peace had been signed at Aix-la-Chapelle. One of the conditions of the treaty restored Madras to the English company in exchange for Louisburg, which the North American colonists had won and had to give up as reluctantly as Madras was yielded by Dupleix.

A speedy revival of trade, after an exhausting war, was essential in the commercial interests of both companies. But before the English headquarters were moved from Fort St. David to Madras in 1752, the English and French had plunged on opposite sides into Indian politics and all hope of peace and goodwill disappeared in efforts to build up a strong position before war should break out again between the two countries.

Direct open hostilities were not possible, but the indirect method of lending troops to rival Indian princes in order to back their own political manœuvres was an obvious way of extending the influence of the companies. They had raised forces which were expensive

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Clive's criticisms of these operations are given in *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. pp. 68-76.



to keep up, but which, on account of mutual jealousy, they were not prepared to disband. On the other hand the prestige of troops trained and disciplined on Western lines made ambitious Indian nobles eager to bid for their services regardless of the consequences of calling in the armed European. This offered to the companies the alluring prospect of turning the heavy drain of their military establishments to a handsome profit by Indian campaigns, with the added hope of valuable trade concessions and even territory at the expense of a rival. The temptation was too strong to resist and it was taken, to quote Orme's comment, by the English with great indiscretion and by the French with the utmost ambition.

The English Governor Floyer was the first to embark upon this policy. In March 1749 he was approached by Shahji, the dispossessed ruler of the Maratha State of Tanjore, who offered to give the English Devi-Kottai, at the mouth of the Coleroon, in exchange for the help of the company's troops to reinstate him. The campaign began with half-hearted operations under Captain Cope, but in June (1749) Devi-Kottai was taken by Major Lawrence with Clive as his second-in-command. After the capture of Devi-Kottai a compact was made with the King of Tanjore who ceded the place to the company in perpetuity and agreed to reimburse the expenses of the war, while Shahji's claims were compounded for a pension from Tanjore State.<sup>1</sup>

The whole affair was a political blunder of the first order, as it gave Dupleix an excellent precedent for taking part in the quarrels of the Indian rulers at the moment when he was meditating similar designs of a much more important and far-reaching character.<sup>2</sup>

The Nizam's death in 1748 had put an end to the period of settled government and comparative peace which he had given to the Deccan. There were two claimants to the succession. While his eldest son remained at Delhi, deep in imperial affairs, the Nizam's second son Nasir Jang, who was at Aurangabad, took the government into his own hands. He was immediately challenged by Muzaffar Jang, son of a daughter of the Nizam, and his claim was backed by some form of authority from Delhi.

<sup>1</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I pp. 107 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 68-70, 75, 76.

Another political complication arose in the Carnatic. The old Nizam had appointed Anwar-ud-din as Nawab in order to prevent the office from becoming hereditary. But that able representative of the dispossessed family, Chanda Sahib, was released from prison in 1749 and he quickly made common cause with Muzaffar Jang, and opened up negotiations with the French in order to gain for himself the Nawabship of the Carnatic. Dupleix had not forgiven the Nawab Anwar-ud-din for the part he played during the operations against the English company, and he made an alliance with Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib.

The first objective of the French and their allies was the Carnatic. On the 3rd August 1749 Anwar-ud-din was defeated and killed at the battle of Ambur, and Dupleix received for his help territory round Pondicherry in full right, which more than doubled the French company's possessions there, and gave them, in addition, the district of Masulipatam and the island of Divi. The English Company at once retorted in kind by seizing St. Thomé, an important point four miles from Madras, in the name of Muhammad Ali, the son and heir of Anwar-ud-din. Issue was now joined, for the English openly backed Muhammad Ali and favoured Nasir Jang. It was clear to Dupleix that he would never be virtual master of the Carnatic, as the power behind Chanda Sahib, while Muhammad Ali was still to be reckoned with; nor could he control the politics of the Deccan while Nasir Jang remained Nizam.

Nasir Jang was slow to realize that the Franco-Indian victory in the Carnatic meant danger to himself. But at the beginning of 1750 he took action, appeared on the Carnatic border with a large army, and formally appointed Muhammad Ali as Nawab. At the end of March Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib, their forces augmented by 2000 Europeans under D'Auteuil, the brother-in-law of Dupleix, moved out from Pondicherry. They were met at Vilnier by Nasir Jang's army, assisted by the famous Morari Rao's Maratha freebooters and 600 Europeans under Major Lawrence. The French contingent behaved badly, Muzaffar Jang's army broke in panic and he himself was taken prisoner by Nasir Jang, who at once retired to Arcot. Here he stayed inactive, while Dupleix disciplined his

troops, restored their morale, and then sent the Marquis Charles Castelnau de Bussy, the best general the French ever had in India, to reopen the campaign. De Bussy, in a series of brilliant operations, took Jinji, which had been thought impregnable, and then threatened Arcot. Nasir Jang was killed in action in December 1750 and Muzaffar Jang, released from captivity, returned to Pondicherry to be welcomed as Nizam by Dupleix, while Chanda Sahib was made Nawab of the Carnatic.

Additional grants of territory on the Orissa coast were made to the French by the new Nizam. Dupleix himself was accorded high rank as a Mogul noble and given a *jagir*, while he was recognized as Governor of all India south of the Kistna River. To emphasize the sovereignty which this implied, Pondicherry coinage was proclaimed to be the sole currency of Southern India. In return Dupleix, under the mistaken impression that the English company would quietly accept the new situation, deprived himself of the services of his one first-rate general by sending de Bussy up to the Deccan to support Muzaffar Jang with 300 Europeans and 4000 Indian troops.

But on the march northwards the French plans were threatened with complete disaster. Three dissatisfied Pathan nobles plotted against the new Nizam and killed him. De Bussy was, however, a master of statecraft. He pressed on to Aurangabad, and in April 1751 proclaimed Salabat Jang, the eldest son of the first Nizam, Viceroy of the Deccan, with the consent of the nobles and the army. Salabat Jang confirmed all the privileges which his predecessors had granted to the French, and de Bussy with forces which were eventually augmented to 900 Europeans with additional Indian reinforcements, took up his quarters at Hyderabad.

De Bussy was now the real master of the Deccan, and Dupleix the acknowledged ruler of a dominion in the south the size of France with 30,000,000 inhabitants and defended by a victorious army. The French position in India had become so strong that Dupleix even planned to make Salabat Jang, through de Bussy, ruler of Bengal. The prestige of the English was at its lowest ebb.

But while de Bussy succeeded in making his position in the Deccan apparently impregnable by obtaining the personal grant of four districts to pay for the upkeep of his troops and by filling the chief administrative posts with ministers favourable to the French, the position in the south had developed an element of weakness. To win the Deccan, Dupleix had been obliged to divide his forces, and he had no longer the means to support his policy in the Carnatic. His ambitions had lured him into the snare of a double objective.

Major Lawrence had returned to England, disgusted by the perpetual interference of the civil power in military matters and dissatisfied with his position as commander of the forces.<sup>1</sup> But the easy-going Floyer had been replaced at Fort St. David by Thomas Saunders, a level-headed and resolute governor who supported Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic with the troops and the indifferent leaders at his disposal.

In January 1751 an unlucky campaign was opened by the English which led to the occupation of the whole of the Carnatic by Chanda Sahib and his French auxiliaries and the investment of Trichinopoly. The effort made by Captain Gingsen, a Swiss officer in the English company's service, to relieve the place in July, ended in disaster and the fall of Trichinopoly, whose safety was vital to English interests, seemed only a question of days.

But the hour brought the man. Clive, who had reverted to civil employ, returned to military service with the rank of captain in January 1751. Although he was not yet twenty-six, he already had considerable war experience, but the plan which he put before the governor was the outcome of his outstanding characteristics, an instinctive insight, quick decisive judgement and dauntless courage. To make certain of taking Trichinopoly, Chanda Sahib and his French allies had left Arcot with an insufficient garrison. Clive's scheme was to make a surprise attack upon Arcot, sixty-four miles south of Madras, and force upon Chanda Sahib the alternative of losing his capital or raising the siege of Trichinopoly. The proposal combined the greatest daring with masterly strategy.

Saunders agreed, and leaving Madras and Fort St. David with

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 128.





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less than 150 men for their defence, Clive marched out from Madras with 200 Europeans, 300 Indian infantry, 3 guns and only four trained officers on the 6th September 1751<sup>1</sup> to strike the first blow which was to lead to British supremacy in India. On the 12th, having pushed on throughout the previous day in the teeth of a furious monsoon storm, he marched into the town of Arcot and occupied the fortress without firing a shot; the garrison had fled. During the following week he harassed the former garrison which was still in the neighbourhood, and did all that was possible to strengthen the defences for the approaching siege.

All the efforts of the French and their Indian allies failed to retake Arcot, and after fifty days' investment the place was relieved on the 26th November by Morari Rao. When the siege began, after a gallant sortie led by Clive, only 120 Europeans and 200 Indians remained fit for duty.<sup>2</sup> But "inspired by the indefatigable activity, unshaken constancy and undaunted courage"<sup>3</sup> of their young commander they had held the dilapidated perimeter of a fortress a mile in circumference under the stress of fatigue, hunger and disease against the assaults of 10,000 men.

Arcot was a serious blow to French prestige, a factor of vital importance in Indian politics, and the tide of fortune now turned against them in the south.

Jacques Law, nephew of the Regency minister and commander of the French forces, was forced to surrender in June 1752 with 800 Europeans to Major Lawrence, who had returned to India, and Chanda Sahib was beheaded by his Indian enemies. Orme records that he was brave, benevolent, humane and generous, and that his military ability was such that had he been given supreme command of the French troops the catastrophe of the surrender at Srirangam, which made Muhammad Ali the undisputed Nawab of the Carnatic, would never have occurred. In ability and character Chanda Sahib was immeasurably a better man than his successful

<sup>1</sup> N.S.: by the old calendar 26th August, *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I pp. 137-138.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. pp. 144, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 196. The account given in this chapter of the French and English in the Carnatic is based on Orme's *History*.

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rival Muhammad Ali, who was shifty in his dealings, extravagant to the extent of hopeless insolvency and an unending source of trouble to the English Company.<sup>1</sup>

Intermittent hostilities, in which the French almost invariably failed and the English gained no great advantage, continued in the Carnatic until August 1754, when the French commissioner Godeheu landed at Pondicherry. The French and British governments had agreed to end the unofficial war between the companies in India, and Dupleix was recalled to France.

*Character of Dupleix.* The career of the great Frenchman was over. He had devoted his talents and his large private fortune with unfaltering courage to the creation of a French empire in India, relying in every move of his tortuous diplomacy on his ambitious, spirited and gifted wife, who was of mixed French and Indian parentage and had been born in Pondicherry. Dupleix had been hampered throughout by lack of support from home, by his own idealism, by his uncompromising attitude towards the English company, and by the corruption in the administration of the Carnatic due to his Indian agents. But notwithstanding his almost fatal interference in military matters (he superseded five commanders in under three years) and the defects in his character which made it impossible for any official other than de Bussy to work with him, "all his countrymen concurred in thinking that his dismissal from the government of Pondicherry was the greatest detriment that could have happened to their interests in India."<sup>2</sup> Dupleix, whose only recognition by the French Government had been the grant of a marquisate while he was in India, died in great poverty in 1763.

*The French Expedition* The fall of Dupleix seriously shook de Bussy's position in the Deccan. Salabat Jang was weak and irresolute, and his new minister, Shah Nawaz Khan, was hostile to the French. But de Bussy, by his tact and personal prestige, backed by the timely arrival of Law with reinforcements

<sup>1</sup> See Thornton, *History of the British Empire in India*, pp. 26, 41, 57, 161.

<sup>2</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 378, 379.



which brought his force up to more than 1000 Europeans and 5000 Indians, succeeded in foiling the attempts of the minister to get rid of him. He kept his hold over the Deccan until the news of the declaration of war between Great Britain and France reached India towards the end of 1756, when he invaded Orissa and, with Clive engaged in Bengal, seized the English factories and made himself master of much of the coast between Madras and the Hugli.

The French Government, on the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, determined to drive the English out of India, and after considerable delay despatched 1200 regular troops under Comte de Lally-Tollendal to effect this with a squadron of nine ships, including three first-rate men-of-war, under Commodore d'Aché. On the scale of European operations in India at a time when six field guns generally decided a battle, the force was equivalent to a formidable army, and added to the troops then in the country was sufficient to reduce, temporarily at any rate, the English settlements on the Coromandel coast. The French squadron was superior in numbers to the British on the Indian station, and about equal to it in fighting value.<sup>1</sup>

But the expedition laboured under two fatal disadvantages. In the first place it started too late. Had it sailed from Brest as soon as war was declared, the French forces would have reached India at the critical moment when the English, having lost their forts and factories in Bengal, were about to make their effort to restore their fortunes in that province. By the time Lally landed at Pondicherry in April 1758, Plassey had been won and Clive was able to report that "perfect tranquillity reigns in Bengal."

The second disastrous defect lay in the character of the commander of the expedition. Lally, then fifty-eight years of age, the son of an Irish exile and a French mother, had seen much active service and had gained a great reputation for personal courage. But, as the Directors of the *Compagnie des Indes* were told when they applied for his services, he was a hot-headed, obstinate martinet who was liable to outbursts of ungovernable temper at the least

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 307.

check or blunder, and would certainly make himself so generally detested that his own officers would be goaded to foil all his operations for the satisfaction of ruining their general. In spite of this unequivocal opinion Lally was appointed syndic of the company, commissary for the king and commander-in-chief of the French forces in India over the head of de Bussy and superseding Duval de Leyril, Dupleix's successor at Pondicherry. His instructions would have taxed the genius of a Napoleon, for he was expected to reform the whole French administration in India while engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the English.

The voyage ended with the first of several indecisive naval actions between d'Aché and the British squadron under Pocock, while Lally landed his men and took Fort St. David without much difficulty. He followed this up by a futile campaign against the Raja of Tanjore, which damaged his reputation, and by embittered discussions with d'Aché and the council at Pondicherry which weakened his position. He then recalled de Bussy from Hyderabad. Had Lally's purpose been fulfilled this would have been accompanied by a concentration of the French forces in India, a sound strategic move. But de Bussy refused to withdraw a man from the Deccan, and the only results were an immediate quarrel between the two Frenchmen and the final extinction of French ascendancy at the Nizam's court, where English influence took its place.

In the middle of December 1758 Lally laid siege to Madras. Superficially the French fortunes seemed to stand as high as they were when Dupleix was in India. The only places in the Carnatic still in English hands were Chingleput, Madras and Trichinopoly. But in January 1759, while Governor Pigot and Stringer Lawrence were resolutely defending Madras, Clive could accurately forecast coming events in a letter to Pitt<sup>1</sup>: "Notwithstanding the extraordinary effort made by the French in sending M. Lally with a considerable force last year, I am confident before the end of this

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Rt. Hon. William Pitt, Secretary of State, dated Calcutta 7th January 1759. It is quoted in full by Forrest, *Life of Clive*, Appendix to Vol. II.

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they will be near their last gasp in the Carnatic, unless some very unforeseen event interfere in their favour. The superiority of our squadron and the plenty of money and supplies of all kinds which our friends on the coast will be furnished with from this province (Bengal), while the enemy are in total want of everything, without any visible means of redress, cannot fail of wholly effecting their ruin in that, as well as in every other part of India."

On 16th February 1759 the British fleet appeared off Madras and Lally, whose operations had been hampered by the activities of the English forces in the neighbourhood, raised the siege. This reverse was soon followed by another. In October 1758 Clive had sent Colonel Lionel Forde from Bengal to expel the French from the Northern Circars, the districts which the Nizam had assigned to de Bussy for the payment of his troops. Forde was handicapped by shortage of ammunition and a lack of funds which brought on a mutiny of his troops. But he was able to overcome these difficulties, took Masulipatam on the 8th April 1759 after a month's siege, and signed a treaty with Salabat Jang six weeks later which brought the expedition to a successful conclusion and dealt a fatal blow to the French.

*Pocock and d'Aché.* The French could still oppose 2000 Europeans to the 1000 of the East India Company in the Carnatic, but Lally's failure before Madras and the fall of Masulipatam were the turning-point of the war on land. The issue at sea was decided in September. D'Aché returned to the Coromandel coast from the Isle of France, where he had refitted and revictualled under the greatest difficulties at the beginning of the month, and on the 10th September he met Pocock's squadron. The British commodore had nine ships to d'Aché's eleven, but he attacked without hesitation, and after a stubborn and even contest the French broke off the action and took refuge under the guns of Pondicherry. On the 1st October 1759 d'Aché sailed for the islands never to return, and left Pondicherry to the grip of the British blockade.

As Mahan observes: "From that time the result was certain.

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The English continued to receive reinforcements from home, the French did not; the men opposed to Lally were superior in ability; place after place fell, and in January 1761 Pondicherry itself surrendered, surrounded by land and cut off from the sea. This was the end of the French power in India, for though Pondicherry and other possessions were restored at the peace, the English tenure there was never again shaken, even under the attacks of the skilful and bold Suffren, who twenty years later met difficulties as great as d'Aché's with a vigour and conduct which the latter at a more hopeful moment failed to show."<sup>1</sup>

In October 1759 Lieut.-Colonel Eyre Coote arrived from England with the 84th regiment (now the 2nd York and Lancaster Regiment) 1000 strong, and after sending a detachment up to Bengal began operations against the French with 1700 Europeans and the company's Indian troops. After capturing a number of small forts he forced Lally to an engagement at Wandiwash, which the French (strongly against the advice of de Bussy) were trying to retake, on the 22nd January 1760. The French order of battle under Lally and de Bussy consisted of 2250 Europeans, 1300 Indian infantry and 16 guns, and Coote had 1900 Royal and E.I.C. European troops, 2100 Indian infantry, 1250 Indian cavalry and 26 guns. The action was fought almost entirely between the European troops, and resulted in the complete defeat of the French, de Bussy being taken prisoner and Lally wounded. By the first week in April the only places held by the French in the Carnatic were Jinji and Pondicherry.<sup>2</sup>

Coote invested Pondicherry a month later, while the British fleet established a blockade, and the end of the last French foothold in India became only a question of how long Lally could hold out. His attempt to retrieve the situation by an alliance with Haidar Ali, the rising general in the service of the Mysore government, had come to nothing; he was on the worst of terms with his own council; there were no

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, pp. 310, 311.

<sup>2</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 577-589.

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available funds and hardly any supplies. The gallant defence by the weak and half-starved garrison came to an end on 16th January 1761 and Lally surrendered.

The fall of Pondicherry marks the end of the contest between the French and the English for supremacy in India, for the French incursion during the American Revolutionary War never took hold in the country. The result was due in the first place to the influence of sea-power which enabled the English to receive supplies and money from Bengal and reinforcements from Europe, while the French could get nothing but what came with difficulty to them by land. Another cause was the maladministration of the French financial affairs at home and in India. Lally came out with insufficient supplies and he was continually embarrassed for means to pay his troops, to obtain material, and to pay his workpeople. As Voltaire says, immense sums had been spent during more than forty years to maintain a company equally maladroit in commerce and in war, that had never made any profits, and had paid no genuine dividends either to shareholders or to creditors. Also a third contributory cause was the highly unsuitable character of Lally himself, although nothing could have exceeded his personal courage in the midst of overwhelming difficulties. But none of these considerations was allowed to weigh on Lally's return to France. He was thrown into the Bastille and two and a half years later was executed for betrayal of the interests of his king and the company of the Indies.

The security of the East India Company's position as regards European rivalry after the fall of Pondicherry is emphasized by an operation which took place in 1762. The successful world war which Pitt had been directing for six years fully absorbed all the resources of Great Britain, and although that minister had resigned in October 1761 his policy was continued when war was forced upon the country by Spain in January 1762. Manilla was to be attacked, and the English company in India undertook what was to be the last military operation of the Seven Years War. The expedition sailed from

*Expedition to  
Manilla.*

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Madras in August, supported by the fleet, and resulted in the whole group of Philippine Islands surrendering in October, and paying a ransom of four million dollars.<sup>1</sup> The colony was, however, restored to Spain at the end of the war.

On the 10th February 1763 peace was signed at Paris. By the terms relating to India France recovered the *Treaty of Paris.* possessions she had held before Dupleix became governor, but she gave up the right of erecting fortifications or keeping troops in Bengal. It was tacitly understood that the English company should keep all its conquests. The French could still trade in India but the political pretensions of France had been swept away.

The Treaty of Paris marks the point when the maritime powers of Europe finally withdrew from all serious rivalry either in commerce or conquest in India. After 1763 the struggle for ascendancy lay between the British and the Indian powers—"a contest of which the issue was so far from being doubtful, amazing or invisible that it could be and was already foreseen and foretold."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 97.

### NOTE 1.—THE BRITISH AND FRENCH NAVIES.

In both countries naval discipline and administration had been sapped by the long peace. The British Navy had been reduced from 84 battleships and 40 fifty-gun ships in 1727 to 70 and 19 respectively in 1734. In 1744 the French had 45 ships of the line, but the British first-rates had risen after four years war with Spain to 90. In 1747, towards the end of the war with Spain and France, Great Britain had 126 battleships; France had 31 in bad condition, while their dockyards were destitute of material. The French ships built between 1740 and 1800 were better designed class for class than the British, but the British officers and men were superior, and kept this advantage of seamanship by habitually blockading the French ports. Mahan, *op cit.*, pp. 259, 260.

### NOTE 2.

The Chronology of the events of this period is given at the end of Chapter XIV.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### The English in Bengal

THE Anglo-French struggle in India was fought in the Carnatic, but the foundations of British supremacy over the Indian powers were laid in Bengal. This province was the richest in agriculture and manufactures in all India, with a revenue three times as large as that of any other province. Its quota in lieu of further revenue under the feudal system of India according to the *Ain-i-Akbari* was 23,000 cavalry, 800,000 infantry, over 4000 guns and a number of elephants and armed boats. Such resources made the ruler of Bengal as powerful a vassal—or as dangerous an enemy—to the Mogul Emperor as Charles of Burgundy was to Louis XI of France. Consequently its governors after Akbar took over the country were chosen for their devotion to the throne as well as for their eminence in the State. Todar Mal, the great administrator, and Man Singh, Akbar's famous general, were both rulers of Bengal.

But when the empire broke up and Bengal was no longer part of a supremely powerful state, its geographical position made it weaker than any other part of India to withstand foreign aggression. It was the province most exposed to maritime attack and the most valuable in every respect to a seafaring and commercial race like the English. The industries of Bengal included the muslins of Dacca, the silk stuffs of Kasimbazar, jute from its many villages, opium and saltpetre from Patna. The Hooghly gave a far easier entrance to a fleet than the north-western passes to an invading army, while the great rivers of Bengal, the equivalent to the railways of today, led like main arteries up to the heart of India six hundred miles from the sea. As Sir Alfred Lyall has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> whoever holds the great plain stretching from the Himalaya south-eastward to the Bay of Bengal occupies

<sup>1</sup> *The Rise of the British Dominion in India*



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the central position that dominates all the rest of the country. Calcutta was the true centre of government and Bengal the base from which the English between 1757 and 1849 expanded their dominion by wars with the Indian powers.

Akbar annexed Bengal in 1576 and three years later he created the office of finance minister, or *diwan*. This appointment was made by the Emperor, and the minister, who was responsible for the collection of the revenue, the expenditure of public money and the administration of civil justice, was only partly subordinate to the governor. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, which were administered as two separate provinces after 1607, were re-united under one viceroy in 1697 and shortly afterwards Patna became the seat of the provincial government. After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the office of governor, then held by Murshid Quli Khan, became hereditary and to all intents and purposes independent. Murshid Quli Khan, the first and perhaps the ablest of these rulers, combined the civil and military administration with complete financial control, and abolished the check on expenditure which the finance minister had supplied.<sup>1</sup>

The third hereditary governor, Sarfaraz Khan, who had neither ability nor morals, was killed when fighting the Tartar Deputy-governor of Bihar, Ali Wardi Khan, in 1740,<sup>2</sup> a year after his accession, and Ali Wardi proclaimed himself viceroy. The new ruler was exemplary in his private life, and a man of outstanding ability. He appointed Hindus to high positions and administered the province exceptionally well.

Ali Wardi's rise to power had, however, seriously alarmed the Nizam of the Deccan, who incited the Marathas to attack him, and his campaigns against these invaders kept him fully occupied until he bought them off and ceded Orissa to the Confederacy in 1751.

Bombay had been taken over by the East India Company with the sovereign powers which had been exercised by the Portuguese. But the real development of British sovereignty in India had its origin in the little group of villages on the mud-flats of the Hooghly over which the company

*The English at Calcutta.*

<sup>1</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, Ascoli, Ch. I.

<sup>2</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 27, 29.

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acquired in 1690 the rights of a landed proprietor, or farmer of taxes. These villages, which formed the nucleus of Calcutta, yielded revenue from land and local taxation, but the company in its position as *zamindar* came under Indian jurisdiction in respect to its holdings.<sup>1</sup> The company's criminal court was not established until the grant of the Royal charter of 1726, when its authority was confined to Europeans.

Murshid Quli Khan had no liking for European trading companies, and his local officials ignored the imperial concessions gained by Surman (1714-17), which granted free trade and additional territory to the English company in Bengal. Calcutta, however, grew in wealth and importance, and the city whose population in 1704 was about 15,000 increased by the middle of the century to an estimated total of more than 100,000.<sup>2</sup>

*Economic Conditions in Bengal* In Mogul times there were muslin factories in the chief weaving centres such as Dacca to supply the imperial household and the Nawab of Bengal with the finer grades of muslin, which gave a considerable stimulus to the industry. In 1753 when trade was flourishing the output of the Dacca cloth trade was estimated at about £350,000 in English money, of which the English company and its servants in the private trade took about a fifth. Reference is made later to the decline in the Indian weaving trade, but it may be said here that, while the production of cotton cloths in Dacca amounted to £300,000 a year in 1766, Rouse, the English chief in the province, reported that in 1776 it had fallen to £200,000.<sup>3</sup> This shrinkage may be attributed to the decline of the Mogul court and to the comparative impoverishment of the provincial government of Bengal.

The overseers of a Mogul weaving establishment had uncontrolled authority over the workers, who were liable to corporal punishment if they tried to abscond. Nor did they receive the full pay due to them. In the time of Siraj-ud-daula, a quarter of their

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Trade Relations*, p. 198.

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pay was said to be deducted by those in charge. Special taxes were also levied on the weavers by the *zamindars* until these were abolished by the East India Company in 1792.<sup>1</sup>

The economic conditions have been described by Orme, the member of council who was collecting materials for his history at least as early as 1757.<sup>2</sup> "The most valuable part of the cargoes returned to Europe consists of silk and cotton manufactures; the weaver of which is an Indian, living and working with his wife and several children in a hut, which scarcely affords him shelter from the sun and rain; his natural indolence however is satisfied in procuring by his daily labour, his daily bread; and the dread of extortion or violence from the officers of the district to which he belongs, makes it prudent in him to appear, and to be poor; so that the chapman who sets him to work, finds him destitute of everything but his loom, and is therefore obliged to furnish him with money, generally half the value of the cloth he is to make, in order to purchase materials, and to subsist him until his work is finished; the merchant who employs a great number of weavers is marked by the higher officers of the government, as a man who can afford to forfeit a part of his wealth, and is therefore obliged to pay for protection, the cost of which, and more, he lays upon the manufactures he has to sell."<sup>3</sup> The wages of an Indian weaver were from six to eight rupees a month,<sup>4</sup> an average of about three shillings and ninepence a week in English money.

The general state of insecurity created by the Maratha invasions during the governorship of Ali Wardi Khan caused the English authorities to consider with some anxiety the defensive possibilities of Calcutta. Fort William, which had been completed in 1716, was none too strong and its works, such as they were, had been masked by

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Clive*, Forrest, Vol. II. pp. 34, 35, quotes a letter dated 1st August 1757, in which Clive offers Orme "Volumes of Material for (his) History in which will appear Fighting, tricks, chicanery, Intrigues, Politics and the Lord knows what."

<sup>3</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, p. 150.

factories built close to the walls. Had the field of fire been cleared, and the fortress put in a reasonable state of defence, the story of the Black Hole might never have been written. But the military weakness of the European companies in Bengal, added to the firm policy of the provincial government, enforced a neutrality between the English and the French; and no action was taken.

The loss of revenue resulting from the English trading privileges coupled with the fear that European influence in Bengal would expand as it had done in the Coromandel, where Indian independent authority had disappeared, had for some time been the cause of increasing irritation to the Bengal Government.<sup>1</sup> This came to a head when Ali Wardi Khan died early in April 1756 and was succeeded by his grandson Siraj-ud-daula, a youth of nineteen, of whom neither his Indian nor English contemporaries have a good word to say. The French, who knew him best, considered his chief characteristics to be cruelty, rapacity and cowardice.

Siraj-ud-daula, actuated by his fear of European aggression, resolved to take the offensive against the English. *Fall of Calcutta.* He seized the factory at Kasimbazar on the 4th of June and on the following day began his advance on Calcutta. The regular garrison of the headquarters of the company in Bengal was only 260 men, with a militia force of about 250 civilians of whom 174 were Europeans and about 1,500 Indian matchlock-men. The fortifications were defective, the senior military officer was worse than incompetent and Siraj-ud-daula brought an overwhelming force to the attack. After the first assault crowds of civilian refugees and deserters from the garrison, together with its commanding officer and the majority of the Presidency council, including the Governor Drake, left the city by river during the night. The civil and military control of Calcutta was then assumed by Holwell, the junior counsellor, and one of the few members of council who stayed at his post. Calcutta, and its remaining garrison of 190 men in all, surrendered on the following evening, the 20th June 1756.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the taking of Calcutta see Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 59-73.

After the surrender, Holwell and 145 companions were crowded, in the hottest season of the year, into a cell 18 feet long by 14 feet 19 inches wide, with only two small windows. The prisoners were put into the room at eight in the evening. When the door was opened in the early morning only twenty-three were still living, one of whom was a young married woman whose husband had died during the night and who was taken to the harem of Mir Jafar, Siraj-ud-daula's general.<sup>1</sup>

This is Holwell's version of the Black Hole, and although arguments have been put forward to discredit his story the weight of the available evidence bears him out.<sup>2</sup> Orme lays the guilt on Siraj-ud-daula by inference,<sup>3</sup> but the responsibility for the Black Hole cannot definitely or fairly be laid on him. If strong contemporary suspicion was well-founded the responsible person was the Sikh banker, Amir Chand, known in history as Omichand. This immensely rich merchant whose interests covered Bengal and Bihar, had for forty years provided most of the English company's investments; that is to say the supply of goods for export. But he had latterly been shut out from the company's business. His resentment led him to intrigue against the English with the Bengal government, and shortly before the attack upon Calcutta he was arrested and put in custody, to be released by Siraj-ud-daula.<sup>4</sup> Holwell was convinced that the Black Hole was Omichand's revenge.<sup>5</sup>

Siraj-ud-daula when report was made to him in the morning at once released the survivors, with the exception of Holwell and two other officers of the company, who were sent to Murshidabad with instructions that they should be well treated.

The news of the loss of Calcutta reached Madras on the 16th of August; and although letters despatched from England in August of the preceding year had warned the Presidencies that war with France was then imminent and

<sup>1</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 77, and Holwell's account quoted in *Life of Clive*, Vol. I. p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> See Note at end of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 76, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 76, 77.

<sup>5</sup> See *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. I. pp. 313, 330, 331.

that a formidable French expedition to Pondicherry was being organized at Brest, the Madras authorities decided to abandon their contemplated attack upon the French in the Deccan and send a strong force to Bengal. This courageous decision, which reduced the English forces in Southern India from an equality with the French to half their number in European troops, was completely justified by subsequent events. But it was only reached in the face of considerable opposition in council by the arguments of Orme the historian, Clive then Deputy-Governor of Fort St. David, and George Pigot the Governor of Madras.<sup>1</sup>

The Bengal field force consisted of three companies of the 39th Foot (now the 1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment), and about 600 European troops of the company and 1500 Indian infantry, all picked men. Admiral Watson arranged to act as escort to the expedition with his squadron, flying his flag in the *Kent*, a 74-gun battleship.

The start was delayed for two months by difference of opinion as to the powers to be given to the commander of the force, and by the still more knotty point as to who the commander should be. Clive was eventually given the command with absolute control of all military matters and operations, while the Governor of Calcutta and his Council were to retain full powers in commercial and civil affairs. Clive was also instructed that if the news of the outbreak of war should reach India while he was still in Bengal he should capture the French settlement of Chandernagore.<sup>2</sup>

The expedition sailed on October 16th from Madras and, skilfully piloted up the almost unknown waters of the Hooghly, began its operations against Siraj-ud-daula. Calcutta was re-occupied on 2nd January 1757 after a bombardment by the fleet, and Admiral Watson replaced Drake as Governor.

Siraj-ud-daula with 20,000 horse and 30,000 foot<sup>3</sup> again moved on Calcutta, but his resolution was shaken by a night attack and he came to terms with Clive. By the treaty which Admiral Watson signed on the 9th February the English factories were restored, the

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II pp. 88, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. to his father, under date 23rd February 1757.

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villages which Surman had obtained, on paper, from Farrukh-Siyar, were handed over, belated sanction was given for the fortification of Calcutta and the company was granted free trade throughout Bengal, Orissa and Bihar.

Siraj-ud-daula then returned to Murshidabad, swayed on the one hand by hatred of the English and on the other by considerable respect for their military power. On the 10th of March, however, a letter was sent under his seal to Admiral Watson permitting him to attack Chandernagore, and the French factory surrendered after a bombardment by the fleet on the 23rd March.<sup>1</sup>

Irresolute in judgement, Siraj-ud-daula had let the English destroy his natural allies the French, and when *Overthrow of Siraj-ud-daula.* Jean Law,<sup>2</sup> the late chief of the Kasimbazar factory, left Murshidabad in April for Patna, French power and influence vanished from Bengal. At the same time, by his own folly, Siraj-ud-daula aroused general hatred in the province. He incurred the bitter enmity of the great Hindu bankers, the *seths*, whose help had largely contributed to establish Ali Wardi Khan as Nawab, and he alienated his army. Revolution was in the air, and while Omichand entered into the intrigues of the *seths* and at the same time made terms with the Nawab, the nobles determined to overthrow Siraj-ud-daula and make Mir Jafar Nawab in his place.

The English Council at Calcutta decided to support Mir Jafar and entered into an alliance with him. But Omichand was let into the secret before his double-dealing was known, and he threatened to reveal the conspiracy to the Nawab unless he received five per cent. on all Siraj-ud-daula's treasure and thirty lakhs, that is to say three million rupees,<sup>3</sup> equivalent to £320,000 at the rate of exchange of the

<sup>1</sup> The story of the commercial ruin of the French settlements in Bengal from the French point of view is to be found in *Three Frenchmen in Bengal*, S. C. Hill (London), 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Law of Bengal and Jacques François Law of the Carnatic were nephews of the Scotsman and French financier John Law of Lauriston.

<sup>3</sup> Clive in his evidence before the House of Commons. The evidence establishing the part played by Omichand in this unsavoury business is to be found in the *Life of Clive*, Vol. I. pp. 417-420.

time. Clive had an exceedingly difficult decision to make on the situation as he saw it. If he allowed himself to be blackmailed by Omichand he had solid grounds for believing that the *seths* and Mir Jafar would refuse to sign the treaty which would bring massacre and ruin upon the English settlements in Bengal. If he rejected Omichand's terms and the conspiracy was revealed to Siraj-ud-daula, the Europeans up country would certainly be murdered and the Nawab with the help of French troops from the Deccan would attack and destroy the English factories. He made up his mind with resolution but, as has been well said,<sup>1</sup> had Omichand sought it he could not have devised a more bitter revenge than the stain which he brought upon the name of Clive. Omichand was completely duped and outwitted, and Clive defended a manoeuvre which went the length of forgery by stating before the Parliamentary Committee: "I think it warrantable in such a case and would do it again a hundred times. I had no interested motive and did it with a design of disappointing the expectations of a rapacious man."<sup>2</sup>

Two copies of a treaty with Mir Jafar were prepared by the Council. The main clauses in each confirmed the concessions already made by Siraj-ud-daula, with additions giving the English sovereignty within Calcutta, a grant of land for the maintenance of an adequate military force and compensation for the public and private losses when Calcutta was taken. This was signed by Admiral Watson.

In the copy which was prepared for Omichand to see a stipulation was added that the banker should be given 20 lakhs of rupees, a reduction of 10 lakhs being made to give Omichand, as Clive expressed it, "no room for suspicion."<sup>3</sup> In this version of the treaty with which Watson had nothing to do, the admiral's signature was added by some person, possibly Henry Lushington. After Plassey, Omichand was told how he had been tricked. Orme, as a rule a most accurate authority, gives a painfully dramatic account of the scene, but his statement that Omichand consequently became insane is questionable. He carried on his business and Clive helped him sub-

<sup>1</sup> S. C. Hill in *Bengal in 1756-1757*

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. I. p. 421.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 428.



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stantially in the matter of a contract.<sup>1</sup> Omichand died eighteen months later.

Mir Jafar accepted the valid treaty on the 5th of June, and Clive marched to fight Siraj-ud-daula with his 900 Europeans, 100 Topasses, 2100 veteran Indian infantry, eight 6-pounder field-guns and two field howitzers,<sup>2</sup> uncertain if his secret ally would co-operate with him. He met the Nawab's army of 18,000 cavalry, 50,000 infantry and fifty 32- and 24-pounder guns at Plassey on 23rd June 1757, and began the action with little hope of success. Fighting until about 2 p.m. was confined to an artillery duel in which the small detachment of French artillery with Siraj-ud-daula's army greatly distinguished itself. The English troops then advanced upon two mounds in front of the Nawab's main position. Mir Jafar and the troops under his command had remained inactive on the right flank of the English line throughout the day and Siraj-ud-daula, seized with the fear of treachery, fled on a camel to Murshidabad, while his army broke in disorder. The total casualties among the King's and company's troops, in the action which cleared the way for British supremacy in India, were 20 Europeans and 52 Indians killed and wounded.<sup>3</sup>

The "whiff of grape-shot" from Clive's guns at Plassey brought the revolution of the Muhammadan nobles, the Hindu bankers and the officials of the English company to a successful conclusion. Mir Jafar became Nawab of Bengal, and when Siraj-ud-daula fell into his hands the ex-governor was immediately murdered.

Clive, who had fought Plassey and installed Mir Jafar at Murshidabad as an officer of the Madras Presidency, had taken full control at Calcutta after the death of Watson in August 1757 and was confirmed by the Court of Directors as governor at Fort William in March 1758, the orders reaching Calcutta in November. In the meanwhile he had reorganized the company's forces and the defences of Calcutta. His position in Bengal in one respect resembled

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Vol. II. pp. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Orme, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 178.

de Bussy's situation in the Deccan. Mir Jafar and Salabat Jang were both weak and incompetent, and they were surrounded by nobles who naturally resented the influence of armed foreigners. But while de Bussy never had more than the districts granted to him by the Nizam on which to rely for the maintenance of his troops, Clive's position was incomparably stronger, for the English had now secured effective financial control, as well as a military hold, over Bengal.

Mir Jafar had been invested with the Nawabship by the English under conditions binding him to grant full compensation for the losses due to the seizure of Calcutta and to pay the war expenses of the company. In addition to this he made enormous gifts to the admirals and to the chief officers of the company, a practice not then considered immoral, nor was it contrary to King's Regulations and the company's rules at that time.

Clive received, as a private donation, 1,600,000 rupees in addition to 280,000 rupees as second in the Select Committee and 200,000 rupees as Commander-in-Chief, a total of £243,000 according to the rate of exchange of the company's bills at the time. The sum eventually paid by Mir Jafar in compensation to the company to European, Indian and Armenian private individuals and as presents, after Plassey, amounted to just over £3,388,000.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this the Nawab had to allot a considerable share of his revenue as the price of the annual support given him by the company.

Mir Jafar in December 1757 signed a further treaty by which he assigned to the company the *zamindari* rights of the fiscal divisions still called the Twenty-four Parganas, an area of about 882 square miles with a yearly assessment equivalent to about £28,000. This was the first important territorial acquisition of the company in Bengal. It gave no sovereign powers, as the Company became a landholder under the Nawab who, in theory at least, was the ruler of the province under the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> But the power of the Mogul emperors had gone, and authority in Bengal was divided between the foreign trading

<sup>1</sup> From the Third Report on . . . the East India Company, pp. 20-23. This is quoted by Mill, *History of British India* (4th Edn.), Vol. III. pp. 367-371.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, pp. 19, 20.

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company and a governor dependent on its troops for the maintenance of his rule. The quit-rent of £28,000 payable by the Company to the Indian Government was assigned to Clive as a *jagir* in return for his services in defeating a formidable invasion of Bengal in 1759.

At the beginning of that year the Emperor Alamgir II's eldest son Ali Gauhar, who was on the worst of terms with his father's chief minister Ghazi-ud-din, advanced to attack the province, with Shuja-ud-daula the ruler of Oudh and 30,000 men.<sup>1</sup> Clive had been made a Commander of Five Thousand horse and Six Thousand foot after Plassey by the Emperor, and Ali Gauhar summoned him to join with the invaders. Clive answered that his rank as a Mogul noble made him a servant of the Emperor, from whom he had received no such orders, and added that he was "under the strictest engagement with the present governor of the province to assist him at all times."

It was a critical moment. Bengal was seething with revolt against the indolence, debauchery and avarice of Mir Jafar, and the company's forces in the province had been greatly reduced by the despatch of reinforcements to the Carnatic, where the French were besieging Madras. But to fight with the odds against him was Clive's strongest incentive to vigorous and successful action. With about 450 European and 2500 Indian troops he covered 400 miles in twenty-three days, occupied Patna and broke the invading army. The fame of Clive's exploit resounded all over India and gained for him the imperial gift of the *jagir*, which after a lively correspondence between him and the Directors<sup>2</sup> was eventually sanctioned. Clive enjoyed his £28,000 a year until his death in 1774, the whole proprietary right in the land and its revenues afterwards reverting to the company.

The situation in Bengal during Clive's first administration at Calcutta was one of great uncertainty and difficulty. The revolution which set Mir Jafar on the throne inaugurated a system of masked government in the province. The English had practically conquered Bengal, yet as

<sup>1</sup> Clive to the Honourable Secret Committee in London 12th March 1759

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. II. pp. 197, 198.

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representatives of a trading company with no authority to annex territory, they felt unable to assume administrative control and were obliged, therefore, to pretend deference towards an Indian ruler who was really subservient to themselves. As Sir Alfred Lyall has pointed out<sup>1</sup>: "Nothing more surely leads to misrule than the degradation of a civil government to subserve the will of some arbitrary force or faction within the state, and in Bengal the evils of precarious and divided authority were greatly heightened by special aggravations."

The interests of the Nawab and the company were diametrically opposed at important points. Mir Jafar wanted to remove the Hindu deputy-governors and replace them by his own friends, and he intended to improve his finances by confiscating the property of the *seths*. His policy towards the company was to evade as far as possible the fulfilment of the financial stipulations of the treaty, and he wished to lessen the power of the English should opportunity arise. It must, however, be said that Mir Jafar had a strong personal liking for Clive, who knew how to deal with an Oriental prince with whom he was firm, candid and courteous but never patronizing.

Clive took effectual measures to protect the threatened Hindus, but the financial relations with Mir Jafar were a continual source of trouble. Both the company and the Nawab were badly in need of money. The Nawab was being pressed by the English to pay from an exhausted treasury the heavy price for the help which had won him his throne. At the same time he dared not reduce his army to lessen his expenditure. This would have put him completely at the mercy of his foreign allies at a time when he needed troops to quell the disorders in his province and hold the frontiers against the Marathas and other invaders.

The authorities at Fort William were obliged to make large remittances to the Carnatic to carry on the war against the French, while they were expected to send money to Europe to pay annual dividends. To increase their resources the company, finding themselves irresistible, began to monopolize the whole trade in some of the most valuable products of the country, which caused additional

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 117.

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irritation and led inevitably to intolerable abuses and confusion in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1759 Mir Jafar saw an opportunity to strike at the English through another European power, and entered into negotiations with the Dutch who were contemplating an expedition to India. In June the governor-general of Batavia sent a considerable force of European and Malay troops to Negapatam and, after an indefensible delay, the expedition reached Bengal in November. While Mir Jafar awaited the turn of events before hurrying to the assistance of the victor, Clive faced the crisis with characteristic energy and resolution. With the situation in the Carnatic before him he was determined to prevent the rise of a European rival in Bengal, and he conscripted every available European, Armenian and man of mixed descent in Calcutta which increased his forces by over 700 men. Colonel Forde had by this time been recalled to Bengal and was placed in command of the field force.

*The Dutch Expedition.* Great Britain and Holland were not known to be at war with each other when Forde began his advance, and before engaging the Dutch he applied to Clive for the authorization of an Order in Council. Clive, who was playing cards when the letter arrived, took up a pencil and wrote on Forde's letter: "Dear Forde, fight 'em immediately. I will send an Order of Council tomorrow."<sup>2</sup>

The contingent from Batavia and the 600 men stationed at Chinsura were beaten in detail, Colonel Forde winning the decisive action of the short campaign at Biderra (Badarah) on the 25th November 1759. With the complete defeat of the Dutch and the limitation of their European troops in India to a handful of factory guards, all danger of war in Bengal with another European power was at an end.

On 21st February 1760 Clive sailed for England, leaving Holwell as acting governor at Fort William. As his ship came out of the Hooghly he was met by a dispatch from the Coromandel announcing the victory of Wandiwash a month before.

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 118

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol II pp. 160, 161.

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*Economic Situation, 1760-1765*      The control of the company's affairs now passed into weaker and incompetent hands, and there began the one short period of Anglo-Indian history which, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall,<sup>1</sup> "throws grave and unpardonable discredit on the English name."

Before dealing with the political events between 1760 and 1765, reference must be made to the general state of Bengal. In the first place the whole administration was paralysed by the serious differences existing between the company, who were virtual masters of the country, and its ostensible ruler who naturally fought against his own effacement, was distracted between the fear of assassination by his own officers and dethronement by the company, and regarded any possible intruder, Dutch or Maratha, as a means to shake off the English. Neither the Nawab nor the English company could give Bengal an efficient government; both became equally unpopular and the province during these years had no authoritative head.

The condition of commerce and industry was equally deplorable. India was then regarded both in England and by the company's servants on the spot as a commercial prize to be exploited. The English traders came out to Bengal solely to make money. With no law in the land and no wholesome restraint of public opinion, the ordinary standards of honour, justice and integrity were generally forgotten in the pursuit of wealth. Many of the Company's servants returned to Europe as "Nabobs" with fortunes amassed by methods which fully deserved the condemnation that has been passed upon them.

For this the Directors and proprietors of East India Company stock were largely to blame, as they would not sanction what they regarded as a heavy charge for salaries. Writers were paid £2, 5s. a month, excluding lodging allowance when quarters were not provided. The highest salaried officers below the governor with his £2700 *per annum* were the counsellors who drew £132, 17s. a year, the more senior officials also receiving gratuities of varying amounts.<sup>2</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 118

<sup>2</sup> Extract from dispatch to Bengal 3rd March 1758 (Record Department, India Office) Writers received 240 rupees and counsellors from 1181 rupees a year, sums which have been converted in the text into sterling at the contemporary rate of exchange

opinion of the Directors, however, "The indigence of our Junior Servants, which may too often have been the effect of their Vices and the Imitation of their Seniors hath not a little Contributed to Increase that load of Complaints . . . urged by the Nabob in regard to the Abuse of Dusticks" (Dustocks, or passes to trade duty free) "a practice we have ever disclaimed and are determined to show in future the strongest Marks of our Resentment to such as shall be guilty of; and do most positively order and direct. . . . That no Writer whatsoever be permitted to keep either Palankeen, Horse or Chaise . . . on pain of being immediately dismissed."<sup>1</sup>

With most inadequate means the company's officials were plunged into surroundings full of infinite temptations to make money in corrupt and dishonest ways. They were in a country where bribes and presents, the customary payments by inferiors to superiors, were an accepted part of the social system; and as the English officials came to be regarded as the embodiment of the real authority of the State they found themselves in a position in which many such doubtful payments were not only voluntarily offered, but could be exacted according to the measure of their power.

Apart from presents and bribes, large sums were to be made by the private trading referred to in the Directors' dispatch. The company, by its concessions from the imperial government, enjoyed complete exemption from Indian transit dues on the goods being collected for export. But its servants looked upon these privileges as permission to themselves to trade duty-free on their own account through the province in such articles as salt, betel and tobacco. Clive had been instructed to place private trading on a legal footing in the negotiations with Mir Jafar, but no authorization for free private trading appeared in the Treaty of 1757. This trade was relatively small during Clive's first administration, and when the Nawab protested against it on the eve of Clive's departure for England a declaration of policy on the question was shelved. But in the following months its volume increased enormously. Illicit trading and the oppression of the industrial workers by local agents which accompanied it spread to English, French, German and American adven-

<sup>1</sup> Ledgers and Journals of the E.I.C. (Record Department, India Office).

turers, as well as to Indian traders, none of whom had anything to do with the Company, and who provided themselves with bought, or forged, free passes.<sup>1</sup>

Warren Hastings, then a junior member of Council, sent a strongly worded report to the governor on "the oppressions committed under the sanction of the English name":

"This evil I am well assured is not confined to our dependants alone, but is practised all over the country by people falsely assuming the habits of our sepoys, or calling themselves our agents. As, on such occasions, the great power of the English intimidates the people from making any resistance, so on the other hand the indolence of the Bengalees, or the difficulty of gaining access to those who might do them justice, prevents our having knowledge of the oppressions, and encourages their continuance, to the great though unmerited scandal of our government. I have been surprised to meet several English flags flying in places which I have passed; and on the river I do not believe that I passed a boat without one. By whatever title they have been assumed. . . . I am sure their frequency can bode no good to the Nabob's revenues, to the quiet of the country, or the honour of our nation; but evidently tend to lessen both of them."<sup>2</sup>

Five months after Clive's departure the new governor, Henry Vansittart, arrived from Madras. His political *Political Events.* record in the Carnatic was excellent, but he lacked initiative and was handicapped by the jealousy of all the Bengal officials whom he had superseded.

Vansittart found himself in a sea of troubles. The Treasury at Calcutta was empty, the English troops at Patna were on the verge of mutiny and deserting in numbers for want of pay; Madras and Bombay was entirely dependent upon Bengal for money; the business arrangements for providing goods for shipment to Europe had been suspended, the Presidency income was barely meeting the current expenses of Calcutta; the allowance paid by the Nawab for

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. II. pp. 225-227.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings to Vansittart, under date 25th April 1762, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Gleig, Vol. I. pp. 107-110.



the troops was several months in arrears, while a large balance was owing on his first agreements; Mir Jafar was old, indolent and voluptuous, estranged from the English and without authority.<sup>1</sup> Vansittart's one consolation lay in the fact that Major Caillaud with a mixed force of King's, company's and provincial troops had just defeated an invading army under Ali Gauhar, who had now become, after his father's murder, the Emperor Shah Alam II.

The most urgent matter was to restore settled government in the province, and the first problem which Vansittart had to solve was the question of a successor to Mir Jafar. *Mir Kasim becomes Nawab.* The Nawab's son Miran, a profligate and a ruthless murderer was killed by lightning in July 1760,<sup>2</sup> and this brought Mir Kasim into prominence. He was a son-in-law of Mir Jafar, had great political ability and was liked by the English. The Nawab refused to accept the proposals made to him that he should cede three districts to the English, make Mir Kasim his heir, and give him the office of deputy governor. Whereupon Mir Jafar was deposed by the English, Mir Kasim was set up in his place, and the ex-Nawab retired to Calcutta where he lived on a pension of 15,000 rupees a month paid by his successor.

By the Treaty signed at the end of September 1760 the new Nawab ceded the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the English for the maintenance of the company's troops. This was the first of the "subsidiary alliances" which were a feature of Lord Wellesley's policy later on. In these districts, as in Calcutta and the Twenty-four Parganas, the company had now the full right of revenue, which they collected themselves, administering the districts through their own agents.<sup>3</sup> But the Treaty was vague in its terms and liable to future misunderstanding. One Nawab had been exchanged for another, but the thorny matter of internal trade had once more been shirked; while the grant of presents which followed,

<sup>1</sup> Mill, *History of British India*, 4th Edn., Vol. III pp. 305, 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Tamul-t-Tawarikh* of Fakir Muhammad, and *Chahar Gulzar Shujat* of Hari Charan Das, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VIII p. 214 and pp. 428, 429, but M. Jean Law, in his *Memoirs*, stated his belief that Miran was assassinated and his tent burnt to conceal the crime.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, p. 20.

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although with the exception of Holwell's they had not been stipulated beforehand, as in the case of Plassey, "cast a sordid air over the whole business."<sup>1</sup>

Clive's policy had been to strengthen the English position. He had gone so far as to suggest to Pitt<sup>2</sup> that Bengal should be taken over by the British Government in full sovereignty, with the easily obtained consent of the Mogul Emperor. As he wrote in his letter: "The natives themselves have no attachment whatever to particular princes; as under the present government they have no security for their lives or properties they would rejoice in so happy an exchange as that of a mild for a despotic government."

Vansittart's policy was to strengthen the position of the Nawab and, unlike Clive, he withdrew English protection from the Hindu ministers of the province. But he failed to realise that a strong Nawab would inevitably wish to reduce the inequitable privileges which the English claimed and that the question of internal trade would bring on a crisis. In 1763, owing to the aggressive behaviour of the company's agent at Patna, matters came to a head and the Nawab declared war upon the English.

The Presidency Council put a force of European and Indian troops into the field under Major Adams, which beat Mir Kasim in a series of engagements. They then restored Mir Jafar as Nawab of Bengal by the Treaty of 27th September 1763. Two months later, after his fourth defeat, Mir Kasim fled to Oudh, having put to death at Patna 150 English officials, officers and men, murdered his unsuccessful commander-in-chief, and butchered two of the *seths* who were innocent of any offence against him.<sup>3</sup> The war dragged on until the cold weather of 1764, while Mir Kasim made an alliance with Shuja-ud-daula, the ruler of Oudh, and with the Emperor Shah Alam II, and Major (afterwards Sir Hector) Munro of the 89th Regiment broke a mutiny

<sup>1</sup> *Camb Hist British Empire*, Vol. IV. pp. 168, 169.

<sup>2</sup> Clive to Pitt, 7th January 1759

<sup>3</sup> An account of the campaign taken from the Powis MSS. is given in *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. II. pp. 236-243.

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of a battalion of Indian troops with great but effective severity, and reorganized his army. On 23rd October 1764, at Buxar, Munro with 857 Europeans, 918 Indian cavalry, 5297 Indian infantry and 20 guns completely defeated the Indian allied forces of more than 40,000 men after a stubbornly contested fight. The allies left 2000 men dead on the field, and Munro's losses were 847 killed and wounded.

Buxar was one of the decisive battles of Indian history. Mir Kasim escaped into obscure poverty; the Emperor submitted and came under the protection of the company; and in February 1765 the fortresses of Chunar and Allahabad were taken and the power of the kingdom of Oudh was broken.

The English had also consolidated their position in Bengal by the Treaty restoring the old Nawab in July 1763. Mir Jafar agreed to limit his forces, to receive a permanent resident at his court, and promised compensation for all losses caused by the war with Mir Kasim. The Nawab died early in 1765, and as his chief minister Nandakumar (Nuncomar) was believed to have betrayed the English plans to the enemy, Mir Jafar's son Najim-ud-daula was only recognized on condition of his appointing a minister nominated by the English, who alone could dismiss him. As Professor Dodwell has observed, by this agreement the long struggle between the English and the Nawab was ended; the Nawab had become a figure-head and the administration of Bengal was conducted by the Company's nominee.<sup>1</sup>

On the 3rd May 1765 Clive, now Lord Clive of Plassey,  
*Clive as* landed at Calcutta as governor with full powers  
*Governor.* to reform the abuses and end the misrule which  
by this time staggered the Directors. To assist  
him in the conduct of political affairs he had a select, or secret,  
committee, the origin of the Foreign Department of the Government  
of India. With the exception of this reserved subject the general  
administration remained in the hands of the Council at Fort  
William.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 174

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The first matter awaiting his decision was the political relationship between the company, the Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh, which had just been complicated by Vansittart's offer of Oudh to the Emperor. Clive solved the problem by restoring to Shuja-ud-daula most of his old dominions on payment of fifty lakhs (5 million rupees), which created on the Bengal frontier a buffer State, whose ruler's every interest was to remain friendly with the English. At the same time he handed over Allahabad and the surrounding districts (formerly within the kingdom of Oudh) to the Emperor, who granted to the company in exchange what is known as the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on payment of an annual sum of twenty-six lakhs to the imperial exchequer.

*Diwani* meant the collection of the revenue of a province and the retention of the surplus after the annual payment had been made to Delhi, as the emoluments and for the expenses of the office. The grant of the *Diwani*, which was the actual starting-point of British revenue administration in India, conferred no sovereign powers, and the general government of the province remained nominally in the hands of the Nawab's deputies. The arrangement had an outward appearance of unreality, but, as Professor Thakore has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> the object of the company was to secure in this way "not as large a territory as they could seize, nor the position of a sovereign, but something far more modest and servicable: reliable friends, a stable frontier, an unimpeachable title, and behind these, years of peaceful and profitable trade." The offer of the *Diwani* had been made to the Company as early as 1758; but the Directors of what was still regarded as a purely commercial undertaking were not then prepared to accept any form of administrative responsibility, and the offer was declined.

Clive appointed Muhammad Reza Khan, deputy of the Nawab after his accession, to collect the revenue for the company, while the old Mogul subordinate revenue officials were retained. The arrangement proved most unfortunate. The English supervisors appointed in 1769 reported that the revenue officials "exacted

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Administration to the Dawn of Responsible Government*, pp. 26, 27.

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what they could from the *xamindars* and great farmers of the revenue, whom they left at liberty to plunder all below, reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in their turn, when they were supposed to have enriched themselves with the spoils of the country." The result of this habitual extortion and injustice was concealment and evasion by the cultivator, and government was defrauded of a large part of its just demands.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, in the governorship of Warren Hastings, the company determined to "stand forth as *diwan*" and reform the entire system.

The most important administrative question which Clive had to settle was that of the company's covenanted servants. With the general demoralization which had set in, the custom had arisen of expecting large presents, open or concealed, with every change of nawab. The accession of Najim-ud-daula had been a particularly bad case. It was not the result of a revolution backed by armed intervention, but the normal succession of a son to his father, and the precedent of presents from the nawab had been extended to the minister as well. This had been done in the face of specific orders from the company prohibiting the acceptance of presents and requiring its servants to sign covenants agreeing not to accept them in future.<sup>2</sup> The council at Fort William pigeonholed these instructions for Clive to deal with, presumed expecting that his previous practice and present influence would have led him to get the orders quashed before he came out as governor. But they were mistaken in their man. In the words of Professor Dodwell, Clive feared nothing, not even his own past; and one of his earliest acts was to require the covenants to be signed by civil and military officers alike.

Clive saw that if illicit gains were to be stopped something would have to be done to increase the income of the company's officials.

<sup>1</sup> *Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company.*

<sup>2</sup> Mill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 372, 373.

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Accordingly, in addition to allowing liberal salaries to the principal Indian ministers, he introduced a scheme to furnish a good income for the senior servants of the company out of the inland trade, a method which it is difficult to defend, and which was vetoed by the Directors. The civil administrative reforms, and the reduction of the field allowances of military officers in Bengal to the level drawn in the Madras Presidency under instructions from London caused insubordination among the civil and military officers of the company. Clive was quite equal to dealing with this, but the mutiny of the English officers of the three brigades in which he had organized the company's troops gave him the gravest anxiety. But the European privates and Indian ranks fortunately proved staunch and the mutiny was quelled in a fortnight. The ringleaders, including a brigadier, were court-martialed and cashiered.

Inflexible in resolution in the conduct of affairs there was another side to Clive's character. Before he left India after his second administration he created what is known as Lord Clive's Fund,<sup>1</sup> by devoting a sum of five hundred thousand rupees to provide pensions for servants of the company, if in poor circumstances, who had to retire on account of ill-health or wounds, and to their widows. The capital was a legacy left to Clive by Mir Jafar, and as it did not come within the company's prohibition it was invested in trustees and tided over the interval until the Directors began to pension their servants.

The most noticeable commercial feature of the time was the shortage of currency which became acute in 1766. This was chiefly due to the stoppage of the bullion imports from Europe upon which India depended for its currency, but it arose in part from the disturbed state of the country and the consequent increase of hoarding. To meet the silver shortage the company introduced a gold currency, the gold mohur equivalent to 14 rupees of 1766 being replaced by a better valued coin worth 16 rupees three years later. The shortage cannot be attributed to a great flow of silver from Bengal to England after

*Trade Relations  
with England*

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. II pp. 317, 318.

Plassey, which in point of fact did not take place<sup>1</sup>; and the balance was adjusted before the end of the eighteenth century by silver remittances from China in return for opium and raw cotton, and by large sums received from America.<sup>2</sup>

It must be noted that Indian governments had not then the European facilities of a paper currency and a general system of credit. Prinsep, writing in 1825, refers to this in his financial review<sup>3</sup>: "If a loan is raised or paid off, the whole amount is received or delivered in . . . silver . . . and the most harassing duty the army has to perform is that of providing treasure escorts for the conveyance of cash from place to place. A large supply in hand is indispensable for the current service of the State, and the amount has been estimated at not less than five or six crore of rupees (fifty or sixty million) for the three Presidencies."

Trade between India and England expanded slowly during this period. The commercial policy of the British Government was the protection of home markets, and this had meant to India the exclusion of her silk manufactures and of calicoes for English use if they were printed and painted. Indian cotton manufactures if imported for home consumption paid duty exceeding by more than 100 per cent. the duty on the raw materials for the textile industries of England. These goods were, however, sent to England for re-export, and at the same time the total export of India's textile goods was largely increased by the company's flourishing trade with other Asiatic countries, where the rice and sugar of Bengal were equally in demand.

Clive left India for the last time in February 1767 to die by his own hand in 1774. His character stands out *Clive's Character.* boldly to be judged by his actions from the day when he began to play a decisive part in Indian history at the age of twenty-six to the end of his second administration as governor when he was only forty-nine. He had an instinctive grasp of

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138-144.

<sup>3</sup> *Transactions in India*, 1813-1823, Vol. II. p. 424.

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essentials; his courage and resolution were as boundless in accepting responsibility when governor as in the field where he showed himself to be a born leader of men. Though he was prone to acts which exhibit an indefensible bluntness of moral feeling, he was incapable of petty meanness; though he made a huge fortune he was not mercenary; though he tricked Omichand he was trusted implicitly by Indians of every class; and although he shut his eyes to the deplorable effects of masked government in Bengal, "Robert, Lord Clive, did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country."<sup>1</sup>

During the five years which elapsed before the appointment of Warren Hastings, two governors were in control at Fort William. Verelst, a close friend of Clive's, succeeded him, and Cartier, a worthy man described by Clive as without sufficient confidence in himself, became governor at the end of 1769.

Within a year of Cartier's appointment Bihar and the greater part of Bengal were devastated by a fearful famine, with all the attendant horrors of the earlier famines in India. There were no government schemes in existence for famine relief, but the company and the provincial authorities contributed large sums and, as is usual in the cause of charity in the East, private individuals of all ranks and creeds subscribed most generously to lessen the distress. It was officially computed that ten million people perished in the year which the famine lasted.<sup>2</sup>

No other event of importance took place in Bengal between Clive's resignation and the appointment of Warren Hastings. But the political situation in Northern India was altered by the move of the Mogul Emperor from Allahabad to Delhi, where he put himself under the protection of the Marathas in December 1771, to spend thirty-two years practically as a State prisoner in their hands, or those of the Afghans.

<sup>1</sup> The last clause is an extract from the Resolution carried without a division in the House of Commons, 21st May 1773.

<sup>2</sup> *The Famine in India*, Forrest, p. 3, pamphlet published in London in 1897.



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The Marathas, under the Peshwa Mahdu Rao, had recovered from the disaster of Panipat, the soldier of fortune Haidar Ali had made himself master of Mysore, and these two formidable powers were an active menace both to the Nizam and to the English at Madras. The Presidency authorities mismanaged the political situation. Instead of cementing their understanding with Hyderabad they blundered into hostilities with that State and were later forced into an unsuccessful war with Mysore in which the Mysore cavalry overran the country up to the outskirts of Madras. Peace was made with Haidar Ali in 1769.

But the Madras council were again unfortunate in their policy. They made compacts with Haidar Ali and the Peshwa and also with the Nizam, by which they agreed to go to the military assistance of each. In the following year the Marathas and Haidar Ali again came to blows, both sides called upon the English to fulfil their treaty obligations, and the Madras government having been severely censured by the Directors for the last war, were driven to offend both by refusing to interfere in any way whatever. The Mysore-Maratha war resulted in the defeat of Haidar Ali, who attributed his failure to his faithless desertion by the English and consequently became their persistent and vindictive enemy.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1772, the year of Warren Hastings' appointment, Madhu Rao died at the age of twenty-eight, and his widow, who bore him a remarkable affection, immolated herself with the corpse. The Peshwa had been ill for some time and his death had at first no visible result, "but the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha empire than the death of this excellent prince. Although the military talents of Madhu Rao were very considerable, his character as a sovereign is entitled to far higher praise and to much greater respect than that of any of his predecessors. He is deservedly celebrated for his firm support of the weak against the oppressive, of the poor against the rich, and, as far as the con-

<sup>1</sup> These events in the Carnatic are detailed by Mill, *op cit*, Vol III Ch VIII., and a general summary is to be found in the *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 136-142.

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stitution of society admitted, for his equity to all. Madhu Rao made no innovations; he improved the system established, endeavoured to amend defects without altering forms, and restrained a corruption which he could not eradicate."<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving the subject of Southern India it should be said that the evils of dual government by the Indian provincial administration and the East India Company were at this time at least as great in the Carnatic as they had been in Bengal. The company's representatives in India had been swept by the tide of events into a situation for which as merchants they were not prepared or, as a rule, fitted. While remote at East India House the Directors, whose business was the prosperity of a great trading corporation, were called upon to face political decisions with which they did not feel competent to grapple. The affairs of the company, in the words of Mill, excited various and conflicting passions in England, and the attention of Parliament was forcibly drawn towards India.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. I. p. 577.

### NOTE 1.—THE BLACK HOLE

Muhammad Ali Khan, who wrote in 1800 what Sir H. M. Elliot has described as one of the most accurate general histories of India, makes no reference to the incident. He merely states that "men, women and children were taken prisoners . . . and all their wealth and property became the booty of the vagabonds of Siraj-ud-daula's army" (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VIII. pp. 324, 325). But Holwell's account is generally corroborated by the narrative of Cooke (*vide Life of Lord Clive*, Forrest, Vol. I. pp. 314, 316), and the Black Hole is referred to by Clive, Watson and Pigot. Mr. J. H. Little in *Bengal Past and Present* (July 1915 and January 1916), discredits the story altogether on the grounds of numerous demonstrable errors and the lack of contemporary reliable support. But it is not, in the circumstances, altogether surprising that the Calcutta Council—who nearly all disgracefully fled to safety—make no reference to it. If Mr. Little's contentions were correct, Holwell's contemporaries, Watts who strongly disliked him, and Drake who had every incentive to minimize such an incident, would have contradicted the story had it been untrue. They did not do so. The evidence as to whether the story of the Black Hole is substantially true, or a concoction, is reviewed by Professor Dodwell (*Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 156, note), who comes to the conclusion that the weight of evidence supports the accepted version. Lord Curzon in Vol. I. Ch. VII. of his *British Government in India* (London, 1925), also deals with the Black Hole.

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### NOTE 2 —THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S ARMY

It is of interest, as marking the beginnings of the British Army in India, to note that after the expedition reached Bengal, Clive reorganized the company's European troops into battalions from the company system of the Madras forces. The battalion formed by him in December 1756 won their first battle honour at Plassey under the simple designation of "The Regiment." After India came under the Crown this battalion became the 101st (Royal Bengal Fusiliers) to be linked with the 104th, under the Cardwell scheme, as the Royal Munster Fusiliers. [*Hist. Royal Munster Fusiliers*, McCance, 1927; MSS. E 1 C Army Lists (Bombay), 1759-88. India Office Records; British Army List, 1862-63; General Order 70, July 1881.] The question of the relative seniority of King's and company's military officers which caused so much difficulty in the course of the Bengal expedition was the first of many which gave great dissatisfaction for years to East India Company officers. To improve their status a certain number of King's Commissions were granted to them in 1788 and 1789. [*History of the Madras Army*, Wilson, Vol. II. pp. 168, 169.] But the Company's officers continued to lose their fair share of commands, an injustice which was not removed until 1855. A Horse Guards' Memorandum then gave "the officers of the East India Company's service . . . rank (and) precedence with those of the Royal Army according to the dates of their commissions, in all parts of Her Majesty's Dominions and elsewhere" (Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV p. 434). The point is of interest in view of the decision made during the War of 1914-18, by which Indians became eligible for a King's Commission, instead of only a Commission from the Viceroy. In the establishment of the first Indian battalions, the only European officers were a captain and an adjutant with one sergeant, to each company, and a commanding officer of the unit, who was assisted by an Indian commandant. In 1796 the Indian infantry were reorganized by linking two battalions into regiments with the same number of English officers as in the British Army. Regimental promotion to the rank of major was then introduced. As regards the men, "a jacket of English broadcloth, made up in the shape of his own dress, the knowledge of his manual exercise, and a few military evolutions constituted the original sepoy; and with this qualification and his English fire-arms, he was found to possess an incalculable superiority over the other natives of India, who, ignorant of the first principles of discipline, were easily defeated."

### CHRONOLOGY TO CHAPTERS XII, XIII, XIV

- 1707. Accession of Bahadur Shah.
- 1709. The two English Companies become United East India Company
- 1712. Accession of Jahandar Shah.
- 1713. Accession of Farrukh-Siyar.
- 1714. Balaji Visvanath first Peshwa of the Marathas.
- 1715. Surman's embassy to Farrukh-Siyar.
- 1719. Accession of Muhammad Shah.

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- 1719. Formation of new French East India Company.
- 1720. Office of Peshwa became hereditary on succession of Baji Rao.
- 1726. Municipal Charters granted to Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.
- 1731. Compact between Nizam and Marathas.
- 1738. Invasion of India by Nadir Shah.  
Marathas defeated Mogul army under Nizam.
- 1739. Nadir Shah defeated Muhammad Shah at Karnal.  
Sack of Delhi.
- 1740. The Marathas raided the Carnatic  
Nawab Dost Ali killed.
- 1742. Aliverdi Khan Nawab of Bengal.  
Dupleix Governor of Pondicherry.
- 1743. Expedition of the Nizam of Hyderabad to the Carnatic.
- 1744. War of the Austrian Succession.
- 1746. De la Bourdonnais took Madras.
- 1748. Siege of Pondicherry by Boscawen.  
Death of the Nizam.  
Accession of Ahmad Shah as Mogul Emperor.  
Ahmad Shah Durrani began series of invasions of India.  
Madras restored to English (by Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle).
- 1749-1754. War of Succession in the Carnatic.
- 1750-1754. War between French and English Companies.
- 1751. De Bussy established Salabat Jang as Nizam.  
Seizure and defence of Arcot by Clive.
- 1752. French defeat at Srirangam; death of Chanda Sahib.
- 1754. Recall of Dupleix.  
Accession of Alamgir II.  
Truce between English and French Companies.  
Mutiny Act (27 Geo. II. c. 9) passed for Indian forces.
- 1756-1758. Sikhs rise in the Punjab.
- 1756-1763. Seven Years' War.
- 1756. Suraj-ud-daula, Nawab of Bengal, took Calcutta.
- 1757. Clive recovered Calcutta; fought Plassey; and established Mir Jafar as Nawab.
- 1758. Lally's expedition reached India.  
Capture of Fort St. David.  
Siege of Madras.  
Marathas occupied the Punjab.
- 1759. Forde took Masulipatam.  
Ali Gauhar invaded Bihar.  
Lally abandoned siege of Madras.  
Dutch expedition failed in Bengal.
- 1760. Battle of Wandiwash won by Coote over Lally.

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- 1760. Clive left Bengal; succeeded by stop-gap governors and misrule till 1765.  
     Ali Gauhar proclaimed Emperor.  
     Mir Kasim Nawab of Bengal.  
     Marathas took Delhi.
- 1761. Maratha defeat at Panipat by Ahmad Shah Durrani.  
     Lally surrendered Pondicherry.
- 1762. Haidar Ali usurped Mysore.  
     Sikh defeat near Ludhiana by the Afghans.
- 1763. Pondicherry restored to France by Treaty of Paris.  
     Mir Kasim deposed by the English and Mir Jafar restored as Nawab of Bengal.
- 1764. Munro defeated Mir Kasim at Buxar.  
     The Sikhs masters of Lahore.
- 1765. Clive Governor for second time; obtained grant of *diwani* of Bengal; treaties with King of Oudh and Mogul Emperor.
- 1766. Grant of Northern Circars to the Company.  
     Parliamentary inquiry begins into Company's affairs.
- 1767-1769. First Mysore War.
- 1767. Clive finally left India.
- 1768. Nizam ceded Carnatic.
- 1770. Famine in Bengal.
- 1771. East India Company "stand forth as *diwan*" of Bengal.

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## CHAPTER XV

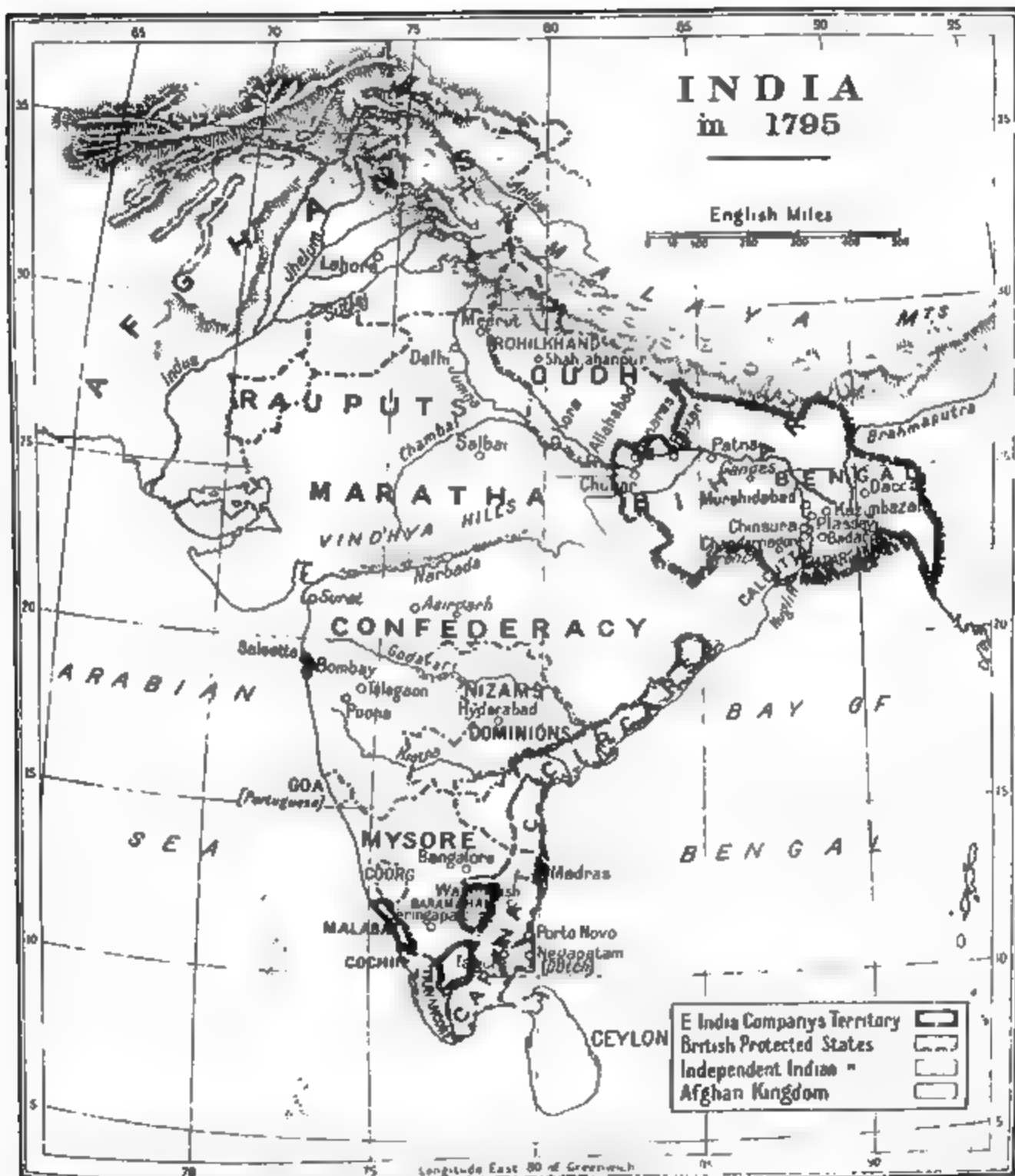
### The Expansion of the East India Company

FROM the holding on suffrance of a few scattered trading centres the company had risen to the control of a great territory and a revenue of £4,000,000, a position which entailed tremendous responsibilities in India, however much these might be neglected, while it raised in England the issue of the relation of the company to the State. Clive had foreseen the difficulties of company government and had offered to Pitt the solution, revived later by Warren Hastings, that the British Government should take over the Company's powers. Apart from the relatively small ceded territories, the triple province of Bengal was still technically within the Mogul Empire, and the Home Government refused.

But the failure of the company to face the problems of administration had meant scandalous misrule; the sight of a few commercial agents handling the wealth of a kingdom was scarcely edifying; and from 1766 onwards Parliamentary debates on India became frequent. Something had to be done, and the first action taken was to give the company a Parliamentary title to their administration in India, and to bring that administration to some extent under ministerial supervision. India House became a buffer between Downing Street and India; and as Sir Courtenay Ilbert has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> the situation created in Bengal by the legislation of 1773 resembled what is now called a protectorate.

The Regulating Act of 1773 was the first experiment at establishing a British Government in India. The early steps were uncertain, many mistakes were to be made, but this innovation was to lead, through the successive stages of Pitt's legislation of 1784 and the Government of India Act of 1858, up to the reforms of 1935.

<sup>1</sup> *The Government of India*, 2nd Edn., p. 51.







## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The transformation of the company into an organized government was followed by another form of expansion. During the administration of Warren Hastings the struggle for supremacy between the British and the military powers of India began in earnest. Then step by step, from recognition as an equal by the great States to unquestioned superiority, the East India Company increased its dominion until at last all India came to be united under British sovereignty, either directly administered or through the Indian States covering two-fifths of the country with their acknowledgement of the paramount Power.

It is confidence in the stability of order, the gift of Great Britain to India, after the series of cataclysms making up her earlier history, which has created among the educated classes of British India in recent years a strong nationalistic feeling best described as political self-respect.

*The First Reforms* Warren Hastings, who had been second counsellor at Madras since 1769, took up his appointment as governor at Fort William in April 1772. General control was in the hands of the governor and a council of about a dozen members who reached their decisions by vote, and foreign policy was directed by the governor and a committee of two. For the collection of the revenue of Bengal, Orissa and Bihar together with the administration of the civil courts, the Deputy Finance Ministers, Muhammad Reza Khan at Murshidabad and Shilab Rai at Patna, were responsible, and they had under them an exclusively Indian staff of officials. English supervisors had been appointed in 1769 to inquire into the land settlement question and make a report; they had also to prepare a rent-roll which, in the circumstances, was too much to expect. The whole of the provincial administration was under the control of the government at Fort William.

The three Presidencies were then completely independent of one another; each was absolute within its own limits and responsible only to headquarters in London. The home administration consisted of the court of twenty-four Directors (who were appointed

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yearly) and the General Court of Proprietors which included all holders of £500 of company stock.

The Directors had given Hastings "full powers to make a complete reformation," and he at once began to take measures on the lines laid down by the Directors. He abolished the office of Deputy Finance Minister, and Muhammad Reza Khan and Shilab Rai were tried, and acquitted, on charges of peculation. A Board of Revenue was set up in their place consisting of the governor and members of council; the supervisors became revenue collectors of districts, and the Treasury was moved from Murshidabad to Calcutta. The collectors presided over the civil courts in their districts, and Indian law officers sat in the criminal courts to explain the Muhammadan law, proceedings which were supervised by the district collectors.<sup>1</sup> Chief civil and criminal courts were established in Calcutta, which, in theory at least, derived their authority from the Mogul government in whose name the company administered the revenue.<sup>2</sup>

The dual system of government in Bengal was at an end. But the earliest attempt to collect the revenue, by farming out the estates to the highest bidder, was most unfortunate. This first effort of the company to manage its revenue affairs resulted in the complete extinction of a skilled, though corrupt, collecting agency and the substitution of an untrained and foreign agency, appointed to collect a revenue that must be, by the very manner of its assessment, excessive.<sup>3</sup> As will be seen, reform, both by the company and by the British Parliament, had to come by the method of "trial and error."

Hastings effectually stamped out the crying abuse of internal trade by the company's servants and their local agents. By March 1775 he had abolished the fraudulent use of free trading passes and suppressed the local custom-houses. He substituted instead central custom-houses at Calcutta, Hooghly, Murshidabad, Patna

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Report . . . Select Committee of the House of Commons (pp. 95, 96 of Report as printed in *Early Revenue History of Bengal*).

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Report . . . Select Committee, p. 96 of *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, and Ilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, pp. 31-33.

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and Dacca, and he lowered the duties to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on all goods<sup>1</sup> (except the monopolies of salt, betel-nut and tobacco), to be paid by all Europeans and Indians alike.

The pay of the company's senior servants in India had been by this time considerably increased. The Governor of Bengal now received in salary and allowances £4800 a year, which, with the fluctuating commission on the revenues granted to him, raised his total pay in 1772-73 to £23,316. The counsellors drew from £342 to £386 in pay and allowances, together with commission which ranged in that year from £2687 for the senior member to £1194 for the remainder. The other servants of the company drew no commission and their salaries descended from £81 for a senior merchant to £50 for a writer. Salaries for governors and counsellors in the other Presidencies and in Sumatra and St. Helena were considerably less.<sup>2</sup>

A matter which Hastings had to settle on taking over charge was the position of the young Nawab, Mubarik-ud-daula, who had just succeeded. The Nawabs of Bengal had become pensioners of the company, the prince was a minor, and arrangements had to be made for the management of his affairs, which had been controlled by Muhammad Reza Khan until his dismissal. Hastings cut down the Civil List from thirty-two lakhs to sixteen, and selected as the Nawab's guardian, Manni Begam, the widow of Mir Jafar. To have appointed a woman was, in the East, distinctly unusual, and to have passed over the boy's mother for one who had been a court dancing-girl in early life undoubtedly needed justification. But the arguments in its favour put forward by Hastings satisfied his council, who agreed unanimously.<sup>3</sup> Moreover the Court of Directors approved and the charges levelled by Nuncomar and his English associates might be left without further reference were it not for the dimensions which Nuncomar's case was to assume. The reduction of the Nawab's pension was made by order of the Directors,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Edn. 1841, Gleig, Vol. I. p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> *Account of Salaries, etc.*, dated India House, 11th June 1773 (India Office Records).

<sup>3</sup> Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Edn. 1841, Vol. I. pp. 269, 270.

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but Hastings so reformed its administration that the Nawab actually received more than before for his personal use.<sup>1</sup>

Hastings had become governor "determined to introduce a regular system of protection into the country." It was badly needed. Bengal had been infested for centuries by an extraordinary people called the Sanyasis, hillmen from the Himalaya who roamed mostly naked as pilgrims through the country, were venerated by the Hindus, and kidnapped children wherever they went. In 1773 Hastings organized flying columns of Indian troops and drove the Sanyasis out of the country. But in spite of frontier guards they troubled the northern districts until the end of the century.<sup>2</sup> He also put down with effective severity the gangs of armed robbers who plagued Bengal.

In the same year he reorganized the manufacture and sale of the government monopolies of salt and opium, and for the greater part of a century his regulations were the basis of the system followed by the Government of India.

The tireless energy of Hastings during his governorship of Bengal also included the reform of the coinage by the introduction of what is known as the "sicca" rupee. The standard rupee of the company was first issued about fifty years later.

Reports reached Calcutta in 1773 of the British Government's intention to give Fort William a High Court enforcing the penal code of England. Hastings received this news with the comment: "If the Lord Chief Justice and his judges should come amongst us with their institutes, the Lord have mercy upon us! . . . Is it not a contradiction of the common notions of equity and policy that the English gentlemen of Cumberland and Argyleshire should regulate the polity of a nation which they know only by the lacs which it has sent to Britain, and by the reduction which it has occasioned in their land-tax?"<sup>3</sup> His policy was to preserve the Indian laws and make improvements on this foundation.

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Gleig, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 294, 298, 395. <sup>3</sup> Gleig, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 273.

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He was convinced that to rule justly and sympathetically over the peoples of India it was essential to know their laws and customs. These had "continued unchanged from the remotest antiquity," as the Muhammadan government had "generally left their privileges untouched, and suffered the people to remain in quiet possession of institutes which time and religion had rendered familiar to their understandings and sacred to their affections." It would be, he maintained, "a wanton tyranny to require their obedience to (laws) of which they are wholly ignorant" and could not possibly acquire a knowledge. In order that English administrators should know what these Indian laws were, he had, on his appointment as governor, begun, through a body of Indian professors, the translation of the Code of Manu from Sanskrit first into Persian, which he knew well himself, and then into English.<sup>1</sup> This new learning, the knowledge of Sanskrit, was to open to English, French and German scholars the immense wealth of ancient culture enshrined in Hindu literature which had never even been suspected in the West. In 1781 Hastings instituted the Muhammadan College of Calcutta; and later helped Sir William Jones to found the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

The keystone of the foreign policy of Fort William was the maintenance of the kingdom of Oudh as a guard to the western frontier of Bengal. Shah Alam had come to terms with the Marathas in 1771 and Hastings, with the concurrence of his council and the approval of the directors, decided to stop the imperial tribute of twenty-six lakhs, and to restore the Allahabad districts to Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh on payment of fifty lakhs. For the Emperor by his move to Delhi had become completely dependent upon the company's enemies, the Marathas, then a menace to every State in India outside the Punjab. The confederacy under the Peshwa still existed, but it had become more loosely knit, for the different Maratha chiefs were beginning to found separate rulerships.

<sup>1</sup> Gleig, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 399-304. The English translation by Sir W. Jones is given in Vol. II. of *The Institutes of Menu*, edited by G. C. Haughton (1825). Vol. I. contains the Sanskrit text.

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Hastings came in contact with the Marathas when they demanded the return of the Allahabad districts to the Emperor (which would have exposed Bengal to attack) and reappeared on the borders of Rohilkhand in 1772 (which threatened the safety of Oudh). The Rohillas asked Oudh for help, Oudh called upon the English, and in 1772 and 1773 the allied forces drove off the Marathas, thanks in the latter year to the revolution in Poona following the death of the Peshwa Madhu Rao.<sup>1</sup>

The operations were straightforward, but the network of intrigue which surrounded them, springing from the desire of Shuja-ud-daula to annex Rohilkhand, eventually brought down a storm of obloquy upon Hastings. A treaty had been signed between Rohilkhand and Oudh, on the advice of the English General Sir Robert Barker, by which Shuja-ud-daula was to receive forty lakhs from the Rohillas when the Marathas retired "either by peace or war." But the Rohillas refused to pay on the grounds that renewed Maratha attack was still possible, and Shuja-ud-daula asked Hastings to lend him troops with which to seize Rohilkhand, offering to pay the company forty lakhs and the expenses of the force employed. Influenced by the advantages of consolidating Oudh into "a complete compact State shut in effectually from foreign invasions by the Ganges," Hastings finally consented, and the combined forces invaded Rohilkhand in the spring of 1774. The Rohillas fought bravely but they were completely defeated, their leader Hafiz Rahmat Khan was killed, and the country was formally annexed to the kingdom of Oudh.

This action of Hastings is difficult to defend. The political advantage had been gained by an unprovoked aggression upon a State with whom the company had been on not unfriendly terms, and on other grounds the Rohilla war was even less justifiable. Hafiz Rahmat Khan was an admirable ruler, and under him and his brother chiefs it may fairly be said that the mass of the Hindu population were treated with greater consideration and received better protection than was the case in any of the neighbouring provinces excepting those in the

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 3 et seq.

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possession of Najib-ud-daula,<sup>1</sup> who was himself a Rohilla, in the Punjab.<sup>2</sup>

In the meanwhile Parliament had intervened in the affairs of the company. A Committee of the House was appointed in 1766, and this led to a series of Acts regulating the voting at any Company meeting and, in the case of the East India company, the declaration of dividends; while the company were required to pay an annual sum of £400,000 into the Treasury as the recognition by Parliament of their territorial gains.

These arrangements were based on the assumption that the company, whose dividends had risen from 6 per cent. in 1766 to 11 per cent. in 1770, could well afford to pay a heavy tribute to the state. The very reverse was the case. The company's servants might be returning to England with huge fortunes, but in 1772 after declaring a dividend of 12½ per cent. in March, the directors were driven to confess to the ministry in July that nothing less than a loan of a million pounds could save them from immediate ruin. They were supporting an army of over 30,000 men and their campaigns, however successful, had been expensive, the bulk of the spoils had not been credited to the company's account, tribute and pensions had to be paid, and a large proportion of the wealth which should have passed into the general exchequer had found its way into the pockets of the company's servants. The total debt was estimated at more than six million sterling.

Lord North's government took advantage of the situation to alter the company's system of administration, and in 1773 Parliament passed two Acts, after violent opposition, by overwhelming majorities. One of these Acts met the financial embarrassments of the company by a loan of £1,400,000 at 4 per cent. and suspended the annual pay-

<sup>1</sup> *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, Strachey (London), 1892. Sir John Strachey, however, strongly defends Hastings. Thornton (*op. cit.*, pp. 124, 125) is more critical, while Mill and Macaulay, in the words of Professor Dodwell "wasted a good deal of sentiment and falsified a good deal of history." But the facts were bad enough.

<sup>2</sup> Najib-ud-daula died in October 1770.

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ment to the government, while it limited the dividend and enforced a half-yearly submission of the accounts to the Treasury. The other, and infinitely more important, was the Regulating Act. By this the directors were to sit for four years, a quarter of their number being annually renewed, and the qualification for a vote in the court of proprietors was raised from £500 to £1000. But by far the most important clauses referred to administration in India. A governor-general and four counsellors were appointed for the Bengal Presidency, and not only was the government at Fort William given charge of the whole civil and military administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, but it was given control over the presidencies of Madras, Bombay and the still surviving settlement of Bencoolen (Fort Marlborough) in Sumatra.

Warren Hastings was named in the Act as the first governor-general, with General Sir John Clavering, Colonel the Hon. George Monson, Richard Barwell and Philip Francis as his council. These appointments were for five years and their holders could only be removed by the king on the representation of the court of directors, under whose direct orders the "Governor-general of Bengal in Council" remained. At the end of five years these appointments were to be vested in the company. The government was under the court of directors who, in their turn, had to submit to the Treasury all matters referring to the company's revenue and transmit to a Secretary of State all correspondence relating to the civil and military affairs of the country. The governor-general and council were empowered to make ordinances for the administration of the company's possessions in India provided these did not traverse the laws of England, were registered by the supreme court established by the Act, and were not set aside by the King in Council.

By the Act a Supreme Court of judicature was established at Fort William, consisting of a chief justice and three other judges to be appointed by the crown. The jurisdiction of the court extended to all British subjects in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (with the exception of the governor-general and his council), and to the hearing of actions in which Indians living in the triple province were involved



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with British subjects.<sup>1</sup> Offences were to be tried by a jury of British residents in Calcutta, and there was the right of appeal to the privy council. The governor-general and council and the judges of the supreme court were to act as justices of the peace and hold quarter sessions. The clause dealing with civil cases between British subjects and "inhabitants" of the country was vague and, even more unfortunately, the relations between the council and the court were left undefined.

The governor-general was to have annually £25,000, the members of council £10,000, the chief justice £8000, and each puisne judge £6000. The other provisions of the Act forbade private trading by the company's servants, or the acceptance of presents from any Asiatic, excepting professional fees earned by barristers, doctors, and chaplains.<sup>2</sup>

As Sir Courtenay Ilbert has commented<sup>3</sup>: "In 1773 the theory and the experience were lacking which are requisite for adopting English institutions to new and foreign circumstances. For want of such experience England was destined to lose her colonies in the Western hemisphere. For want of it mistakes were committed which imperilled the empire she was building up in the East. . . . (By the Regulating Act) the company was vested with supreme administrative and military authority. The court was vested with supreme judicial authority. Which of the two authorities was to be paramount? . . . What law was the supreme court to administer? The Act was silent."

Nor was this all. With the boundaries between the executive and judicial powers left to be discovered by incessant disputes, the chief executive authority at Calcutta lay in the hands of a majority in the council where the governor-general had merely a casting vote. There was no governing head to make instant decision on his own responsibility upon matters

<sup>1</sup> This authority apparently excluded by implication civil jurisdiction in suits by British subjects against "inhabitants" of the country, except by consent of the defendant. *Government of India*, Ilbert, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> For fuller details of the Act see Ilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>3</sup> Ilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 52, 53.

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of emergency. Prompt action was impossible where opportunity presented itself for prolonged opposition to any controversial measure.

Given men of reasonable goodwill and moderation, this method of government, faulty though it was, might have worked with tolerable success. But goodwill, moderation, even reason itself were not to be found in the majority of the council. The selection of its members was hardly promising, with two royal favourites of no political capacity, an experienced but not particularly distinguished member of Hastings's former administration and an ambitious minor Whig politician.<sup>1</sup> Only one member, Barwell, had ever set foot in Bengal before his appointment.

Clavering was the type of man quite unfitted to be a general officer and was, if possible, even more unsuitable for councils of State. He was personally brave, but stupid, utterly tactless, quick to take offence and violently hot-tempered. Monson had sense, but he was blindly prejudiced and easily led. Barwell was a prosy official, none too scrupulous in his ways of making a fortune, but he had excellent judgment, was well up in the routine work of administration, and proud to be a steady supporter of the governor-general. The fourth member of council, Francis, after serving on a diplomatic mission to Portugal, had been chief clerk in the War Office. He was a sound classical scholar, and whether he was, as is generally believed, the author of the *Letters of Junius* or not, he appears to have been responsible for a series of political pamphlets which were published anonymously. In character he was unscrupulous, ambitious and bitter, and in the words of Macaulay, he mistook his malevolence for public virtue.

Hastings had been accustomed as governor of Bengal to carry his council with him. He was intolerant of opposition, even when it was honest, and he allowed no consideration of any kind to stand between him and the grasp of full personal power. And now the home government had weighted the dice against him. For two years he was consistently outvoted and over-ruled and, as he said himself, he had been invested with the powers of governor-general

<sup>1</sup> *Warren Hastings, Maker of British India*, A. Mervyn Davies, pp. 148, 149.

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by Act of Parliament only to bear his share in the responsibility of measures of which he did not approve.<sup>1</sup>

On 19th October 1774 the three members of council from England landed at Calcutta, the four judges of the supreme court had arrived two days earlier, and the new form of government was established. Its faults were glaring, on the executive side with a governor-general who was powerless to govern, and with a judicial bench undefined in its scope and entirely ignorant of Indian conditions.

Within a week the council were at loggerheads over Hastings' foreign policy and the Rohilla war; and on the insistence of Francis this resulted in a reversal of the policy which had made Oudh a strong frontier State. By the Treaty of Faizabad Asaf-ud-daula, who had recently succeeded his father, was made to cede Benares and Ghazipur, his richest districts, and increase the subsidy paid monthly, as maintenance for the company's troops, by 50,000 rupees. Oudh was unable with its reduced revenue to meet this expense and the government lapsed into a condition of chaos, which the future did nothing to remedy, and the attempts made by Hastings in 1783 did little to restore order in a country which was then almost without a government.<sup>2</sup>

It is unnecessary to detail the systematic opposition of the majority of the council to Hastings,<sup>3</sup> but from official criticism his opponents descended to charges affecting his personal honour. To such charges Francis was ready enough to listen, and in March 1775 he brought before the council the accusation made by Nuncomar that the governor-general was guilty of gross corruption, one of the charges being supported by a letter said to have been from Manni Begum offering a bribe to secure for her the guardianship of the young Nawab. The facts, as they subsequently emerged when Hastings was impeached, were these. Hastings, when on a visit to Mur-

*Hastings and  
Nuncomar.*

<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Selections from the Letters . . . and other State Papers . . . in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772-1785* (Calcutta), 1890, Vol. II. p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *History of British India*, Thornton, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-129.

shidabad, had accepted from the Nawab's treasury an entertainment allowance equal to £225 a day. In view of the company's recent orders prohibiting the acceptance of presents, the transaction, as Sir James Stephen admits, "if not positively illegal was at least questionable."<sup>1</sup> But after a trial, lasting seven years, upon his whole administration in India, Hastings was unanimously acquitted upon this charge of corruption, the seventh article of his impeachment.

The majority of the council welcomed the charge against Hastings, and in June and July the case was heard by the judges of the supreme court sitting as magistrates, an unfortunate result of the Regulating Act. In the meantime Hastings, Barwell and Vansittart brought counter-charges of conspiracy against Nuncomar, and a Mr. Fowke who was not then in the company's service. In the case of these counter-charges Fowke and Nuncomar were found guilty only as against Barwell. Fowke was fined fifty rupees, but no sentence was passed on Nuncomar, as by this time he was lying under sentence of death for forgery. The charges of corruption against Hastings were then dropped in India and the papers sent to England by the council, to be declared by the company's law officers to be manifestly untrue.

This takes the story of Nuncomar to the point where the venom of Francis, the philippics of Burke and the rhetoric of Macaulay have created in the public mind the impression aptly described by Vincent Smith, that "the Indian Empire rests upon foundations stained by the blood of a judicial murder, planned and executed by the governor-general and the chief justice." It is this which brings Nuncomar's case from its place in the biographies of Hastings and Impey into the pages of history.

At a most opportune moment for Hastings a charge of forgery had been brought against Nuncomar by one Mohan Pershad, the executor of an Indian banker, after failure in a civil suit. The

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of Nuncomar and Impey*, Vol. I. p. 72. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, K.C.S.I., sometime a judge of the High Court (Queen's Bench Division) and a personal friend of Macaulay, examines the whole case with minuteness. He is a strong supporter of Warren Hastings and of Impey, but, as might be expected, his attitude is judicial and his work has been followed to a considerable extent in this account of Nuncomar's case.

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trial took place, from the 8th to the 16th of June, before the supreme court. The Chief Justice was Elijah Impey who, after a distinguished career at Cambridge, was called to the bar and appointed the first chief-justice in India on the recommendation of Thurlow, then attorney-general. Of the three puisne judges who sat with him, Robert Chambers a friend of Doctor Johnson and Vinerian Professor of Law at Oxford had the greatest ability, but he was not a strong judge. Stephen Lemaitre seems to have been narrow-minded, arrogant and violent, and John Hyde was entirely under his influence. The case was tried before a jury of twelve Europeans and Anglo-Indians who found the prisoner guilty; and by the penal law of England to which the court held him to be amenable Nuncomar was sentenced to be hanged. Impey's summing-up<sup>1</sup> laid stress on the points in Nuncomar's favour, but two criticisms must be made on the procedure. The judges severely cross-examined the prisoner's witnesses on the inconclusive grounds that counsel for the prosecution was incompetent; and Impey, through lack of Indian experience, told the jury that if Nuncomar's defence was rebutted the fact condemned him, whereas this rule, as Stephen points out, cannot be applied in the East, where a perfectly good case, should proof be otherwise lacking, is frequently bolstered up by flagrant perjury.

The report of the trial<sup>2</sup> is in itself evidence, as Stephen maintains, that Nuncomar was not the victim of a judicial murder planned by Hastings and carried out by his friend the chief-justice. Sir Elijah Impey was completely exonerated when he was subsequently impeached. Hyde held his office till 1796 when he died, and Sir Robert Chambers afterwards became chief-justice, but no charge whatever was brought against either of them; Lemaitre had died in 1777. The whole bench of judges would have had to be party to the crime and, as Pitt summed up the matter,<sup>3</sup> "the accusation of a conspiracy between Impey and Hastings for the purpose of destroying Nandakumar is destitute of any shadow of proof."

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in full by Stephen, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 139-170.

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, Hansard (London), Vol. XX., 1816, 923-1078.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 88.

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There can be no doubt, however, that the infliction of the death penalty was so severe as to amount to a miscarriage of justice. Nuncomar was, by the irony of fate, a victim to what Hastings had feared would be the inevitable result of imposing upon India the English law of that day by a court ignorant of the country. By English law there were then no less than two hundred capital offences, and forgery was punishable with death up to 1832. It was looked upon by Indians at that time as a mere misdemeanour, and this was the first instance,<sup>1</sup> and inflicted upon an old man and a Brahman, in which the death sentence had ever been carried out in India for forgery. The governor-general took no steps to reprieve his admitted enemy; and Clavering, Monson and Francis, who had it in their power to save the life of the man they had used as a pawn against Hastings, contemptuously rejected his petition.

The clauses of the Regulating Act and of the Charter establishing the supreme court were so vague that collision between the court and the council was inevitable. In their care to avoid proclaiming the King of England sovereign in Bengal, the framers of the Act had established two independent powers and had omitted to define the limits of either. It was impossible to say who really were British subjects, and therefore under the jurisdiction of the court. As Stephen has said: "In one sense the whole population of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were British subjects. In another sense no one was a British subject who was not an Englishman born. In a third sense, inhabitants of Calcutta might be regarded as British subjects, though the general population of Bengal were not." The jurisdiction of the court over the provincial councils and the landholders was equally undefined. Opposed by the majority of his council, the attempt made by Hastings in 1776 to amalgamate the supreme and the company's courts ended in failure, and the two authorities drifted into a conflict which reached its height in the Patna case of 1777-79 and the Kasijora case of 1779-80.

In the Patna case the supreme court claimed jurisdiction over

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

a Muhammadan revenue farmer for an act done in his official capacity, and found that the local officers of the company had allowed their functions to be usurped by the Muhammadan advisors on Moslem law and practice. Sir James Stephen makes the following comment on this case: "If the Patna council was a fair specimen of the rest, the provincial councils, considered as courts of justice, were absolutely worthless, and no system for the administration of justice which deserved the name, existed at that time out of Calcutta."<sup>1</sup> The supreme court cast the Muhammadan law officers of the Patna council in heavy damages, a decision which the directors did not attempt to upset by an appeal to the privy council.

The Kasijora case hung upon the jurisdiction of the supreme court over everyone in the province, the landholders in particular. The court issued a writ against the Raja of Kasijora, the council advised him that he was not subject to the Court and sent a detachment of their Indian troops to arrest the sheriff's officers and bring them back to Calcutta. In the opinion of Stephen the action of the council was, apart from the violence of their methods, quite illegal, but the case resulted in practically confining the jurisdiction of the supreme court to Calcutta.

In 1780 Hastings brought the deadlock to an end by offering Impey the presidency of the company's chief civil court, over which the governor-general had up to this time been the nominal president. The advantage of this arrangement was practical. A real control of a judicial system, which had undoubtedly in the past oppressed the inhabitants of Bengal, was now exercised by a trained and expert judge. But it was open to the criticism that the chief-justice who had been sent out in the king's name to deal amongst other things with complaints against the company's servants was now at the head of the company's judicial system, which was largely staffed by those very servants. Impey, moreover, soon after his appointment began to draw a salary of 5000 rupees a month, revocable by the governor-general, in addition to his salary as chief-justice under the Regulating Act. The impression created in England was that Impey had compromised his dispute with the

<sup>1</sup> *Nuncomar and Impey*, Vol. II p 178.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

council for money in defiance of the Regulating Act. The court of directors (who had not been consulted) and the House of Commons petitioned the Crown for his recall to answer this charge, and Impey left India in 1873. His impeachment, on this and other charges, completely broke down when it was held four years later.

A Parliamentary inquiry on the administration of justice in Bengal in 1781 led to an amending Act which laid down that the supreme court should have no jurisdiction in matters of revenue and its collection; that no Indian should be liable to the court's jurisdiction simply as a landholder or a farmer of rents; and that the court had jurisdiction over all the inhabitants of Calcutta, Hindu or Muhammadan law being administered according to the religion of the defendant in cases of inheritance, contract and successions. Regulations for the provincial courts and councils made by the governor-general and council were to be subject only to the approval of the king in council.<sup>1</sup> The procedure of the supreme court had been, to quote the petition of the Fort William executive, "the control of a foreign law and the terrors of a new and usurped dominion," and the controversy had ended in a victory for the governor-general and council.

One more Act was passed by Parliament during the administration of Warren Hastings. Fox's India Bill of 1783, with its wholesale transfer of patronage from the company to nominees of the crown, was defeated in the House of Lords, and Pitt, at the age of twenty-five, came into power after the general election of 1784. His India Act became law the same year.

The Act put the company in direct and permanent subordination to a body representing the British Government. A Board of Control was established, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the Secretaries of State and four other privy councillors, and these "Commissioners for the Affairs of India were empowered to control all . . . operations and concerns (relating) to the civil or military government or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies." A committee of secrecy consisting of not more

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, pp. 55-58.



## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

than three Directors was formed to transmit any secret orders from the Board to India without informing the other directors; and the control formerly exercised by the court of proprietors was abolished. In India the governor-general's council was reduced to three members, one of whom was to be the commander-in-chief of the company's forces, with precedence next to the governor-general. The governor-general, governors, commander-in-chief and members of council were to be appointed by the court of directors, but they could be removed from office either by the crown or by the directors. The power to make war, except in cases of aggression, was reserved to the court of directors and the secret committee. In the internal administration promotion was to be as a rule by seniority, and writers and cadets were to be sent to India between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two. Pitt's Act, which established double government in India, though modified in details, remained substantially in force until 1858.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle between Hastings and his council ended in 1777.

*Hastings in  
Control.*

Monson died in 1776 and Clavering in 1777. Wheeler was at first inclined to side with Francis, and Sir Eyre Coote, who became commander-in-chief in 1779 in place of Clavering, proved to be a difficult colleague, but Hastings at last gained control in the council. His strength of character had carried him through, although in June 1777, two months before Clavering's death, Hastings had sent in his tentative resignation, which produced in the council "the convulsion of four days."<sup>2</sup> Finally he rid himself of Francis by a pistol-shot in a duel, and his chief enemy sailed for England in November 1780.

The Rohilla campaign was the only military operation for which

*Foreign Policy.*

Hastings was directly responsible. But from 1776 until 1783 his government was engaged in hostilities, owing largely to the rash policy of the Bombay authorities and to the imprudence and incompetence of the governor and council at Madras. In spite of enemies at headquarters in London,

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, pp. 62-66.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings' description of Clavering's "governor-generalship of a day," *Gleig's Memoirs*, Vol. II pp. 157-164.

opposition in his council, and ever-increasing financial difficulties which led to events most damaging to his reputation, Warren Hastings carried the government in India safely through one of the most dangerous crises in English history; and when he left the country the position of the Company was secure, although its ascendancy had still to be definitely established.

The main factor in Indian politics during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was the Maratha power, a power far too strong and united for any available English force to overthrow. Holding the centre of India the Marathas were in an interior position which enabled them to threaten any one of the three divided presidencies, to intrigue against the Company whenever they wished at Hyderabad and with Mysore, and to communicate with the French by their ports on the western seaboard. To the south lay the formidable State consolidated by Haider Ali. As Sir Alfred Lyall has pointed out, the balance of power in India then rested upon a triangular equipoise between the company, the Marathas and Mysore.

The chief actors during this critical period, apart from Hastings himself, were Raghunath Rao (Raghoba), uncle of the Peshwa Madhu Rao, who had died in 1772; Nana Farnavis who by 1778 had secured control at Poona<sup>1</sup>; Mahadji Sindia, guardian of the Emperor and ultimately the dominating Maratha prince until his death in 1794; and Haider Ali of Mysore. Raghunath Rao, on whose behalf Madhu Rao's successor Narayan Rao had been murdered, was a claimant to the Peshwaship, and the Bombay government with the object of enlarging their territory and obtaining political ascendancy at Poona, made a covenant with him by which it was agreed that Bassein, Salsette and the islands of Bombay harbour should be ceded to the company in return for Raghunath's restoration at Poona by English troops.

This treaty led to what is known as the first Maratha war, which the Calcutta government severely condemned. But hostilities had already begun with the seizure of Salsette at the end of 1774. The Bombay forces were commanded by Colonel Keating, who fought a battle at

*The Maratha War.*

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. Ch. XXVIII.

## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Aras (Adas, in the Gujerat district) in May 1775, at the cost of heavy casualties. The operations were brought to an end on the intervention of the Calcutta government, by the Treaty of Purandhar in March 1776,<sup>1</sup> a treaty which never became effective, as Salsette and Bassein were held by the English while the Marathas refused to cede them.

In 1777 the English authorities were alarmed by the appearance of a French adventurer, St. Lubin,<sup>2</sup> who in his supposed character of envoy from France, with proposals of a Maratha alliance, was ostentatiously received by Nana Parnavis. The Bombay government at once formed a new alliance with Raghunath Rao, and Hastings seeing the vital importance of supporting the Company's cause on the Malabar coast sent a column of 6000 Indian troops across India to the Bombay presidency, in the teeth of violent opposition in his council. These reinforcements, after an unconscionable delay in Bundelkhand under Leslie, were to move from the far side of the Narbada none too soon under a new and energetic commander, Goddard.

The Bombay government had already opened their campaign in November 1778 "by desperately sending a handful of men against the strength of the Maratha Empire," to quote Grant Duff's mildest criticism. These operations were entrusted to a committee of the commanding officer, the civil commissioner Carnac,<sup>3</sup> who actually took charge, and another civilian. The force of 600 Europeans and 3300 Indian troops was further encumbered by a baggage train of 19,000 bullocks, and moved on an average of two miles a day. At the beginning of January 1779 Colonel Cockburn's<sup>4</sup> nominal command, when twenty miles from Poona, was met by a Maratha army of 50,000 men. Carnac lost his head and refused to listen to Cockburn's advice, threw the heavy guns into a tank,

<sup>1</sup> See *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. pp. 29-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 70 and footnote, 71, 72 and footnote, 73, 76, 79.

<sup>3</sup> Carnac had held a commission as colonel in Bengal, but Grant Duff invariably refers to him as Mr. Carnac.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel Egerton, the original commander, had resigned early in the advance owing to sickness, "in which," according to Thornton, "the army probably suffered no loss."

burnt the stores and began an immediate retreat. Two days later, on the 13th January, at Wadegaon, the situation of the column was hopeless and the secretary to the committee was set to negotiate terms with Nana Parnavis and with Sindia, who was in command of the Maratha army. By this convention all acquisitions of territory made by the Bombay government since 1773 were to be restored to the Marathas, Sindia was to receive the English share of the Broach revenue, and two English hostages were surrendered as security for the carrying out of the terms. Raghunath Rao relieved the committee of the additional disgrace of handing him over to the Marathas by taking refuge with Sindia and personally making the best terms he could get. Sindia secured him a *jagir*, and the Bombay government ultimately allowed him a pension, but after Wadgaon Raghunath Rao disappears from history.

Hastings at once repudiated the convention of Wadegaon, and the directors in due course dismissed the officers directly responsible for it, but the expedition had been doomed from the start.

Colonel Goddard had crossed the Narbada on 2nd December 1778, and on 26th February 1779 he was at Surat, having covered the last 300 miles in 20 days. His appearance had the best possible effect that circumstances would allow and, on reaching Bombay, he was appointed commander-in-chief. During his advance he had made a firm and valuable alliance with Fateh Singh, the Gackwar of Baroda. But his negotiations with Sindia and the operations which followed were alike inconclusive.

The history of the English in India now reaches a most critical stage. War had broken out in 1778 between Great Britain and France on the French recognition of the independence of the American colonies, and the company began to capture the French possessions in India. Orders were issued from Calcutta to seize the port of Mahé, a likely channel of communication between the French and Mysore, but Haider Ali objected, maintaining that its inhabitants were his subjects. Taking advantage of Haider Ali's preoccupation in picking off some outlying Maratha districts, an English detachment took Mahé in March 1779. Haider Ali made peace with the Marathas, forced the

*Second Mysore War.*

## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Nizam into a triple alliance against the English and in July 1780 descended upon the plains of the Carnatic with an army of about 70,000 men and a French detachment of 400 from Mauritius. The country was plundered, Sir Hector Munro's force of 8000, which he handled indifferently, was handicapped by want of money, supplies and transport, and on 10th September Colonel Baillie, on the march to join Munro, after a gallant fight, met with overwhelming disaster near Conjeeveram. Munro instead of marching to the sound of the guns retired on Madras, and the place might then easily have fallen if Haidar Ali had attacked it in force.

Hastings rose to the situation with characteristic energy and courage although his treasury was exhausted and his military strength overstrained. His diversion in Central India a month earlier had resulted in the brilliant feat of arms achieved by Captain Popham who took Sindia's stronghold of Gwalior in August (1780) by a night escalade, which raised English prestige enormously. The governor-general at once sent Sir Eyre Coote with 600 European troops and fifteen lakhs of rupees by sea to Madras and despatched a strong force of Indian troops overland. He also succeeded in coming to an understanding with Sindia who agreed, at a price, to mediate between the English and the Maratha government. Sir Eyre Coote began his campaign against Haidar Ali, and won a considerable victory at Porto Novo on 1st July 1781, which he followed up by two more successful actions before the end of September. But Coote was unable to drive the Mysore army out of the Carnatic.

In February 1782 the French admiral Suffren appeared off the Coromandel coast and landed 2000 troops. He was a commander of great ability and always ready to attack his enemy, while his British opponent, Sir Edward Hughes, made up for his lesser skill as a tactician and his slight inferiority in numbers by the superior seamanship and better support of his captains. The Dutch had been drawn into the world war and their Indian settlements as well as those of the French had fallen to the company. For the first six months Suffren had no harbour nearer than the Isle of France where he could refit after action; and the open roadsteads of the Coromandel coast had to

*The French Expedition.*

answer while he lived off his enemy. In August he took Trincomalee in Ceylon (a late Dutch possession) and until the war came to an end Suffren and Hughes met in their hard fought actions without any decisive result.<sup>1</sup> In 1783 after peace was declared between Great Britain and France the French admiral sailed back to Europe, to meet with a most cordial reception from a number of Hughes's captains whom he found at the Cape. The French king created a special vice-admiralship for Suffren, to lapse at his death, in demonstration of a gratitude not invariably shown to commanders and administrators, either English or French, when they returned from India after giving of their best for their country.

During 1782 the war on land went none too well for the company. The year had started badly by the almost complete annihilation in Tanjore of a force of 2000 men under Colonel Braithwaite who was surprised by Tipu Sultan, the son of Haidar Ali. But at the end of the year this disaster was more than counterbalanced by the successful negotiations made by Hastings through Sindia to come to terms with the Marathas; and the treaty of Salbai was ratified by Nana Parnavis on 20th February 1783. Amongst the clauses Salsette was recognized as belonging to the company. But the importance of this treaty lay in the fact that it placed the political relations of the English and the Marathas on a new and definite footing. "It secured peace with the Marathas for twenty years, and without the acquisition of any fresh territory it established beyond dispute the dominance of the British as a controlling factor in Indian politics, their subsequent rise in 1818 to the position of the paramount power being an inevitable result of the position gained by the treaty of Salbai."<sup>2</sup>

Haidar Ali died on 7th December 1782. He had seen the Nizam detached by Hastings from the confederacy in 1780 and he lived to see the certainty of peace between the English and the Marathas. Before his death he had a remarkable conversation with his minister in which he said: "Between the English and me there were perhaps

<sup>1</sup> See *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan, pp. 427-467.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 271. For details of the Treaty see *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 146, 147.

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mutual grounds of dissatisfaction but not sufficient cause for war, and I might have made them my friends. . . . The defeat of many Braithwaites and Baillies will not destroy them. I can ruin their resources by land but I cannot dry up the sea, and I must be first weary of a war in which I can gain nothing by fighting." Thornton estimates his character in the phrase "his ruffian life." Illiterate, brutal and irreligious, Haidar Ali unquestionably was, and had he not been utterly unscrupulous his adventurous and successful career for all his natural ability would have been impossible.

After the treaty of Salbai and the death of his father, Tipu Sultan continued the war with the English supported by a strong contingent of French troops under de Bussy, who reached India in April 1783. Tipu, a bold and energetic commander, and de Bussy, old and worn out though he was, were more than a match for the incompetent Stuart who had succeeded to the command after Sir Eyre Coote's death early in 1783. But before a decision was reached the news of peace between Great Britain and France reached India in July of that year.

Tipu's operations had met with considerable success but he was now without an ally, his resources were almost exhausted, his capital was menaced by Colonel Fullarton, and the Marathas were threatening to attack him. But his good fortune did not fail him here. Lord Macartney, the governor at Madras, was anxious to make peace at any price, and the negotiations which were opened were entirely influenced "by the arrogance and insolence of Tipu Sultan . . . encouraged by the timid subservience of the Madras government."<sup>1</sup> By the terms of the treaty of Mangalore, which ended the long hostilities on 11th March 1784, all conquests on either side were restored, and the surviving prisoners of war held by Tipu Sultan, amounting to more than 2600, including about 1100 European officers and men were to be released. In spite of orders from Fort William no reference was made in the articles to the treaty of Salbai, but Hastings was most reluctantly obliged to ratify the treaty made at Mangalore.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the British Empire in India*, Thornton, p. 171.

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That the English dominion emerged from this prolonged struggle uninjured, though not unshaken, is a result due to the political fearlessness of Warren Hastings. The difficulties which the governor-general had to face apart from the anxieties of the war itself were almost endless. Even after the death of Clavering his own council were not invariably helpful; the two junior presidency governments showed their jealousy of the control of Bengal by frequent and injurious acts of insubordination; the Madras council was supine, and torn by internal dissensions, while "corruption revelled unrestrained."<sup>1</sup> To this there was added the ever-pressing necessity of finding money from a treasury drained by the campaigns against the Marathas to prosecute the war after the outbreak of hostilities with France, against the hostile combination in Southern India. Money was desperately needed in 1778, Hastings was not willing to float a loan, the modern procedure in such circumstances, and he decided to resort to the Mogul method of raising money in cases of emergency—by demand.

His choice of a subject fell on the Raja of Benares, Chait Singh, whose tenure and measure of independence as regards the company was not clearly defined. Hastings felt himself justified in demanding from him a special sum of five lakhs of rupees (over £50,000) in addition to his regular tribute of £225,000, assuming him definitely to be a tributary landholder. The council, eventually including Francis, concurred. Similar sums were demanded in the two following years. Chait Singh delayed payment, and also made difficulties about furnishing 1000 horse which Sir Eyre Coote wanted for the defence of Bihar. Hastings had every reason to believe that Chait Singh had ample resources to meet these demands, though he had much less reason to assume that the Raja was in secret communication with the Marathas.

He resolved to act as if Chait Singh was "a tributary landholder,"<sup>2</sup> announced his intention of levying a fine of forty or fifty lakhs, and set off in July 1781 with a weak escort to Benares, which was, and is,

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Hastings, *Maker of British India*, pp. 294-297.



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the heart of Hinduism and a place of pilgrimage for Hindus from every part of India. When he reached Benares Hastings placed Chait Singh under arrest. The populace rose and massacred a company of the Indian escort with their officers. Chait Singh escaped to his army, now in rebellion against the treatment he had received, and Hastings who showed the greatest coolness in a highly dangerous situation found his way to Chunar, concentrated his available forces and drove Chait Singh into exile in Gwalior. The Raja's dominions were sequestered and given to a nephew, whose annual tribute was raised to £400,000.

The point raised at the impeachment of Hastings was that the company had, in 1775, definitely bound itself to levy no contribution beyond Chait Singh's tribute of £225,000; and there was the further aggravation that Hastings, after refusing a personal present of £20,000 from the Raja, took the money a few days later to equip an expedition against Sindia, and then went on to attempt to levy the fine of £500,000. But the House of Lords acquitted him by a majority of twenty-three to six on the charge relating to Chait Singh.

Hastings had still to find the money he so urgently needed, and he now turned to Oudh, whose Nawab Asaf-ud-daula, owed the company a considerable sum for arrears of subsidy. The Nawab's mother and grandmother, the princesses of Oudh, had inherited from the late ruler Shuja-ud-daula estates and treasure estimated at about two million pounds. Asaf-ud-daula maintained that under Muhammadan law the princesses had no right to so large a proportion of this property and that, while the bulk should have come to him, part of it should have been used to satisfy the company's claim. On the other hand, in 1775, the widow of Shuja-ud-daula had been induced by the company's Resident to pay her son £300,000 in addition to £250,000 he had already received, on condition that he and the company guaranteed that no further demand should ever be made upon her. That guarantee was given.<sup>1</sup> But when Asaf-ud-daula at the end of 1781 asked permission to seize the fortune of the princesses,

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 300.

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Hastings, in the government's desperate straits for money, withdrew the Company's protection from the Begams and instructed the Resident Middleton "not (to) allow any negotiations or forbearance . . . until the Begams are at the entire mercy of the Nawab."<sup>1</sup> Hastings was convinced that the Oudh princesses had aided Chait Singh in the Benares affair and he was determined to show no mercy to the "old women . . . who had very nigh effected our destruction." The Nawab himself was more reluctant, but in December 1782 the Begams' treasury officers, under pressure, paid over large sums of money.

These are the chief financial dealings of Hastings with Indian rulers which were brought up at his impeachment. Taking his whole administration the evidence was enough to warrant Pitt and Dundas in their decision to bring Hastings to trial, and the charges look their blackest if the attendant circumstances with which the governor-general had to grapple are not taken into account. But as Sir Alfred Lyall has said, "Allowance must be made for a perilous situation in a distant land [England was six months' distance away by sea], and for the weight of enormous national interests committed to the charge of the one man capable of sustaining them." When the storm had blown over in India and he had piloted his vessel into calm water he was sacrificed with little or no hesitation to party exigencies in England.<sup>2</sup> Burke called Hastings a "spider of hell," and no incident was thought too small if it could be twisted into an accusation against him.

In February 1785, Hastings, whose terms of office had been extended, left India to face the cumbersome and prolonged trial which ended in his acquittal on every count by large majorities. He had come home with £80,000,<sup>3</sup> and his impeachment cost him little short of a hundred thousand, but the company were as generous as the government of the day would allow. Amidst a circle of devoted friends he lived on, quietly and happily, for more than twenty years

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from the . . . State Papers in the Foreign Department of the Government of India*, Forrest, Vol. III. p. 969.

<sup>2</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 177, 178.

<sup>3</sup> *Warren Hastings, Maker of British India*, p. 511.

## EXPANSION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

in the house of his ancestors at Daylesford which he had bought back in 1789.

Pending the appointment of a successor to Hastings the senior member of council, John Macpherson, took charge. His experiences even for those days of adventurers had been extensive and peculiar. He had arrived in India as a ship's purser and became secretary to the Nawab of the Carnatic, whose rule was corruption personified, by showing Muhammad Ali a magic lantern and some electrical experiments.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent gratitude of the Nawab secured Macpherson a writership in the Madras government, from which he was soon dismissed for irregularities. Within four years he reappeared from England, as a member of the Bengal council in succession to Barwell. Macpherson was undoubtedly very able, and he seems to have made advantageous reforms during the twenty months of his administration.<sup>2</sup> But he appears to have fully deserved the intense distrust he inspired at Fort William, and his eventual retirement, with a knighthood, marks the end of the old and evil period in Bengal.

Earl Cornwallis landed in India in September 1786. He had made it a condition of his appointment that he should be empowered to override his council in special cases, and this was embodied in an Act passed in 1786, which enabled him to hold, in addition, the office of commander-in-chief. His powers were again extended in 1791.

Cornwallis was the first of the great dynasty of governors-general to be appointed from England; and with very few exceptions the highest post in India was now closed to the covenanted servants of the company. The peers selected for the appointment had naturally more weight with the home authorities than was possible to members of the civil service in India and they had the advantage of a wider political experience. Yet none of them proved to be a greater ruler than Warren Hastings.

The chief merchant president of a chartered company had been

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *History of the British Empire in India*, 2nd Edn., p. 187.

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exchanged for a senatorial proconsul and Cornwallis came to India with clearly defined and supreme authority over all three presidencies. In the subordinate presidencies of Madras and Bombay, the governors were also selected in England, "among persons of eminence . . . rather than among the servants of the Company" to quote Canning when at the Board of Control. But in point of fact only second-rate men were as a rule willing to accept second-rate posts, and Lord William Bentinck is the only man of real eminence who can be named among them.<sup>1</sup>

Cornwallis had been charged by Parliament to follow a pacific policy and the ministry expected him to concentrate on the reform of the land revenue system, the general administration and the judiciary. But, by the force of circumstances, it was under the first two Parliamentary governors-general, Cornwallis and Wellesley, between 1786 and 1805 that the greatest expansion of British territory in India took place, until the time of Lord Dalhousie more than a generation later.<sup>2</sup>

The reform of the revenue administration in Bengal was the first matter taken up by Cornwallis. Indian governments have from the earliest times exercised their right to demand a considerable share of the gross produce of the soil, and even today, with such sources as customs, excise and other receipts, land revenue provides 15 per cent. of the total revenue of British India,<sup>3</sup> and the proportion was in earlier times as high as three quarters of the revenue. Successive governments in India found it convenient to employ a middleman to collect this revenue, known as a *zamindar*. The word *zamindar* has no exact English equivalent, as landholder needs qualification. He succeeded by inheritance, subject to a renewal of title from his sovereign, and the payment of what amounted to succession duty. Under Mogul administration he was not only normally the annual contractor for the public revenue due from his land, but he was

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. of the British Empire*, Vol. IV. pp. 320, 321.

<sup>2</sup> See *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 204, 205.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral and Material Progress of India (1930-1931)*, H.M. Stationery Office (1932). See diagram facing p. 366.

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responsible for law and order to the extent of handing over law-breaking tenants to a Muhammadan magistrate for trial and punishment. In Akbar's time he received a commission of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., as farmer of the taxes, for collecting the revenue. This is the origin of the landlord's rent levied in most parts of India, where freehold tenure (except in Malabar) is extremely rare.

With a system so universally recognized, the English company, on taking over charge of territory, found the peasants prepared to pay a high proportion of their gross produce in land revenue.<sup>1</sup> But they found great variety in the methods of assessment of land which ranged from immense estates with thousands of tenants down to small peasant holdings well under an acre in size. In the latter case the tenure is called *ryotwari*. At the present day a periodical re-assessment of land values for the purpose of taxation is made throughout the whole of British India, except in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa where the revenue to be paid by each *zamindar* was fixed in perpetuity by Lord Cornwallis. A little less than one-half of the area is in the hands of *zamindars*, and these hold their title, however dubious some of the original claims may have been, from the Government of India. The *zamindari* system prevails in Northern India and the *ryotwari* system, speaking generally, in the south.

The earliest problem, which the company's first attempts, made in Bengal, failed to solve, was to ensure that the assessment was not so high as to throw the land out of cultivation. By the middle of the nineteenth century the great increase in the population created the problem of keeping rents down to a level which would leave the cultivator, who was ready (on such occasions as land might come into the market) to bid extremely high for a holding, sufficient margin on which to live and if possible raise his standard of living.<sup>2</sup> It may here be said that the tendency in the Indian States has been to follow, with considerable caution, the policy of British land administration. Standards of land revenue in

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Moreland in Ch. X. of *Modern India*, 2nd Edn., ed. by Sir John Cumming, p. 154, states that in the Moslem period "the ordinary standards ranged between  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ , with a definite tendency in favour of the higher figure."

<sup>2</sup> *Modern India*, pp. 158, 159.

the States have been lowered, but not to the same extent; there has been some reluctance to make binding engagements for so long a period as thirty years; and there has been a definite preference for the "landholder" system.<sup>1</sup>

The Permanent Settlement of Bengal made by Lord Cornwallis has been the subject of lively difference of opinion since the time of the controversy between his chief advisers John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth) and Charles Grant, Keeper of the Records. Shore maintained that the "rents belonged to the sovereign; the land to the *zamindar*"; while Grant argued that the latter was merely a temporary official and that the right of property in land vested absolutely in the State.<sup>2</sup> The first step taken was to reconstitute the committee of revenue as a board of control over districts administered by collectors who assessed and received the land revenue. The creation of compact districts was the backbone of this reform and was in fact the revival of Akbar's system. This ended centralization of the land revenue administration, with the collectors as mere figure-heads—the fluctuating policy since 1773 which had been strongly disliked by the directors.

The court of directors were under the impression that the investigations already made were sufficient for a clear-cut settlement. But Cornwallis found it necessary, in 1787 and 1788, to make annual settlements of the revenue before issuing the more decisive regulations early in 1790, of a ten-year settlement in Bihar and Bengal. This settlement was made final and permanent in 1793 by the approval of the court of directors and the board of control. It confirmed the *zamindars* in the tenure of what was looked upon as their own land, and gave them great and undefined powers which, incidentally, swept away the rights of a large number of sub-tenants and cultivators.

But there is another criticism which the settlement has provoked. Under earlier Indian law a *zamindar* who failed to pay his share of the revenue had been subject to personal pains and

<sup>1</sup> *Modern India*, Ch. X. p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, Chs. V. and VI. This account given above of the land question is chiefly based on Ascoli's work and on the Fifth Report, Cmd. H. of C. 28th July 1812, pp. 1-166.

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penalties, but he had not been liable to lose for ever his interest in his property by enforced sale because his agent was late in paying the money due to government. The regulations brought in by Cornwallis authorized forced sales and attachment for default of payment. This caused far more distress to the *zamindars* than the older penalties which the governor-general had abolished, in the belief that he was bettering their conditions and establishing in India a society similar to the landed families of England and Scotland. In order to keep up the level of land revenue, a large number of estates were broken up and sold to recover outstanding balances, and "some of the oldest and most respectable families in the country . . . (were) threatened with poverty and ruin."<sup>1</sup> The auction purchasers of the land under these enforced sales were, as might be expected, greedy speculators utterly regardless of any rights which sub-tenants and cultivators might possess.

The effect of this was most unfortunate, and Vincent Smith, who had considerable experience as a United Provinces district officer has recorded his opinion that "the effect on the countryside was then disastrous and probably is still felt. A family which has lost its legal rights by an auction sale always regards the transaction as unjust, and usually becomes the centre of agrarian disturbance, frequently resulting in murder."<sup>2</sup>

The Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons mentions "the extravagance and mismanagement of some of the principal *zamindars* and a great proportion of the landholders" as a cause of their ruin.<sup>3</sup> But an additional reason was undoubtedly the "no rent" attitude taken up by a demoralized tenantry during Lord Wellesley's administration, and in 1799 a regrettable introduction of English law was made to remedy this by giving the *zamindars* the power of distraint.

Had the settlement been considered as an experimental arrangement, the policy strongly advised by Shore, all these results could

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Report, as reprinted in the more accessible *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, pp. 213, 214, 218, 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History of India*, p. 567. First published 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth Report, as given in *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, pp. 216, 217. The Report was published in 1812.

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have been remedied before the permanent settlement became irrevocable.<sup>1</sup>

In 1793 Cornwallis issued his Code, which covered far more than the permanent settlement, for in addition it dealt with civil and criminal justice, with the police and with commerce. Although it was to be modified in later years this code was the foundation of all subsequent British administration in Bengal.

By these regulations the offices of judge and collector<sup>2</sup> were separated, and a judge was appointed to preside over each district court, responsible for all civil cases. Courts of appeal were established like the criminal courts at Patna, Dacca, Murshidabad and Calcutta. The Muhammadan criminal law, in a slightly modified and less drastic form, was followed, for as yet no penal code had been introduced.

The courts, under the reforms of Lord Cornwallis, and based on the practical proposals drawn up by Sir Elijah Impey, were, however, far too few, and "the accumulation of causes on the judges' file . . . threatened to put a stop to the course of justice. In (Burdwan in February 1795) the number on the file was said to be thirty thousand, and the probability of decision to any suit, estimated to exceed the ordinary duration of human life."<sup>3</sup> Over each of these provincial courts were three English judges, who also presided over the criminal courts at these four towns. The supreme court, sitting as the chief civil court of justice, was the highest appeal court in India.

The collectors were given a salary of 1500 rupees a month and the European assistants 500, 400 and 300 rupees respectively, the collectors in addition receiving rather less than one per cent. commission on the revenue collected. All direct and indirect trading by collectors had been forbidden by the directors in 1787. Trade was now to be conducted by the company's commercial residents, who arranged the prices with the manufacturers, made the necessary advances and supervised the

<sup>1</sup> *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Called Deputy Commissioner in Upper India.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth Report quoting letter to the Board of Revenue from the Collector of Burdwan in 1795 (*Early Revenue History of Bengal*, p. 230).



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carrying out of the work, being paid for their services on a commission basis. Cornwallis held the commercial residents responsible that Indians who supported themselves by weaving were not oppressed, and that the local and foreign traders received just treatment. This was an admirable reform, and lasted as long as the company remained a trading body.

The company's trade monopoly was not abolished until 1813, its existence as a commercial body did not end until 1833, but by the time of Cornwallis there had grown up, under the protection of the company, a small body of free European merchants who held the company's licence, but only for export trading. These merchants were of considerable service to the country, as they financed the growing number of indigo planters, and were also able to take off the surplus produce not required by the company and export it to the eastern markets. The increasing importance of the free merchants led to a strong demand for greater freedom of trade with England; and the Charter Act of 1793 introduced by Henry Dundas (Viscount Melville), Pitt's president of the board of control, recognized this private trade by binding the company to allow three thousand tons of private cargo to be carried annually in their ships.<sup>1</sup>

When Cornwallis arrived in India the company had become one of the first-class powers in the country, and was at peace with the Indian States. The Marathas had just joined the Nizam of Hyderabad in an attack upon Mysore, but Cornwallis in accordance with the policy of non-aggression laid down by Act of Parliament refused to join the alliance. He saw, however, as clearly as did Tipu himself, that a collision between Mysore and the company was only a question of time, and both took steps to strengthen their forces.

In the Punjab a new and formidable power had arisen. From persecuted followers of the reforming teacher Nanak, with no thought of political advancement, the Sikhs had grown into a strong, theocratic, feudal confederacy. There were twelve of these "Misals" or confederacies,

*Political  
Situation.*

*The Sikh  
Confederacy.*

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 188-190.

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under independent chiefs, the strongest being the Bhangis of Lahore and Amritsar, who could muster 20,000 men. The total field strength of the Sikhs was then at least 70,000, chiefly horsemen armed with matchlocks. Infantry were looked upon as fit only for garrison duty and artillery only gradually came into use.

Besides the regular confederacies there was a body of fanatics called Akalis, the "soldiers of God," who refused allegiance to any earthly governor, and peculiarly represented the religious element of Sikhism. The Sikhs have a strong feeling that everyone should work, and the Akalis combined abandonment of the world with fighting service, with duty as temple servants or with peaceful occupations for the benefit of the community at large. They inspired awe as well as respect, for they were prepared to plunder those who offended them or injured the commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

The Sikhs had steadily gathered strength since 1752. In 1763 they heavily defeated the Afghan governor of the Punjab near Sirhind and took that province. A year later they were masters of Lahore. In 1767 the confederacies were united by the common danger which threatened from the invasion of India by Ahmad Shah, the last effort of the old and worn-out Durrani ruler to recover the Punjab. The attempt ended in failure and Ahmad Shah, unable to conquer the Sikhs, retired to Kabul after making Amar Singh of Patiala his military commander in Sind, with the title of Maharaja. In the following year the Sikhs took possession of the country as far north as Rawalpindi. Taimur Shah succeeded his father in 1773, and between 1777 and 1779 tried, and failed, to subdue the Punjab. A Mogul expedition sent up against the Sikhs from Delhi in 1779-80 was equally unsuccessful, but a Sikh invasion of the Doab was defeated at Meerut in 1785 by the imperial army after the forces of the Khalsa had levied their exactions up to the walls of Delhi.

The Sikhs were now masters of the whole country between the Jhelum and the Sutlej, and had, in spite of persecution by the later Mogul emperors and repression and defeat by the Afghan armies of Ahmad Shah Durrani, created what may be termed a revival of Hindu nationality in Upper India. At the same time they had

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 104-111.

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raised a barrier, pushed in later years from the Indus to the north-western passes, which put an end to successful Muhammadan invasion from the north, a series of irruptions which had broken loose upon the plains of India for upwards of seven centuries.

This impenetrable buffer State was, as Sir Alfred Lyall has emphasized, exceedingly serviceable and opportune to the English. The company's real danger, the only substantial obstacle to their rising ascendancy, lay always in the possibility of some foreign invasion led by some great captain at the head of the fighting tribes of Central Asia. The barrier of Oudh, though effective enough against the Marathas, would have been of little use against the attack of Central Asiatic hordes. But the rise of the Sikhs kept out the foreign Muhammadan, prevented the resuscitation of any fresh Islamic dynasty upon the ruins of the old empire at Delhi or Lahore, and left the existing north-west frontier of the English unmolested for the critical period when the company were fully occupied with Mysore and the Western Marathas.<sup>1</sup>

Although Cornwallis had felt himself precluded by Act of Parliament from a formal alliance with the Nizam and the leading Marathas, Nana Farnavis, Sindia and Holkar in their attack upon Mysore, he was anxious to check Tipu's power. He therefore wrote a letter to the Nizam, which he declared to be as binding as a treaty. In this he promised to fulfil the obligations of assistance to Hyderabad and the Marathas laid down in the treaty of 1768, if the Nizam were to hand over Guntur in the Northern Sircars to the English. Incidentally the district was then part of the Mysore State. Grant Duff,<sup>2</sup> while pointing out the dangers threatening the Company through Tipu's aggressive policy, remarks that the line adopted by Lord Cornwallis was more objectionable than an avowed defensive alliance; and it was looked upon by Tipu as a direct threat to himself. At the end of 1789 Tipu invaded Travancore, which was under the protection of the company.

The governor-general at once made an open alliance with the

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 181-183.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 194-195.

Nizam and the Marathas, and declared war upon Mysore in 1790. No important operations took place until the end of the year, when the governor-general took the field in person. Cornwallis was an able general, although he had not the quality of good fortune which Napoleon demanded of his marshals. In the war with the American colonists he had routed Gates and Greene in succession, only to be forced to surrender at Yorktown. He now captured Bangalore. But it took two campaigns which lasted until 1792 before Tipu was driven into his capital of Seringapatam by the allies and forced to make terms, which stripped him of the most valuable half of his territory. The English obtained Malabar and Coorg, and Tipu paid in addition an indemnity of 330 lakhs of rupees. Coorg remained a protected State under its raja until 1834, when it was annexed on account of the misconduct of its ruler. The Marathas and the Nizam divided the rest of the ceded territory between them.<sup>1</sup>

Tipu embarked upon a policy of revenge upon the English. He negotiated with the Marathas and with the Afghan king, and resumed his negotiations with the French, whose soldiers of fortune were serving in Hyderabad and with Sindia. But from France he received no more help than the belated encouragement of a letter in 1799 from Bonaparte in Cairo, during the Egyptian expedition; and the only consequence of his dealings with the French was to expose Tipu to the full weight of English hostility. The rupture between England and France brought about in 1793 by the Revolution made French interference impossible.

Mysore had been heavily hit by the treaty of Seringapatam and the Marathas had become the chief Indian power. *The Marathas and Sindia.* The Peshwa was completely overshadowed by Nana Parnavis, but the most dominant Maratha figure was Mahadaji Sindia, whose policy was to maintain his own independence of the confederacy without dissolving it. He had been appointed vice-regent of the empire by Shah Alam II, made large conquests in the north and defeated his rival Holkar after a desperate battle.

Sindia to a great extent owed his lordship over Upper India to

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the operations and terms of peace see *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 195-213.

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the French soldier of fortune General Count de Boigne. De Boigne's adventurous career <sup>1</sup> led him through service with the English against Tipu and a mission to Afghanistan, to become Sindia's best general. He was an excellent, straightforward soldier who drew into Sindia's ranks European officers of all nations, and organized, trained and equipped his troops on English lines. He left India after Mahadaji Sindia's death and retired to end his days as the public benefactor of his native town of Chambery.

Sindia, a man of great ambition, political capacity and ability as a soldier, died in 1794.<sup>2</sup> His independence had been recognized in 1786, his districts in Malwa were well administered by carefully chosen agents and he occupied the country round Delhi with a large and well-appointed army. Had he lived and succeeded in his policy of alliance against the English, the foreign power which threatened the subjugation of all India, he would have been a serious danger to the company.

After his campaign against Mysore the aim of the governor-general was to establish peace in Southern India by inducing the Nizam and the Marathas to join him in a treaty guaranteeing against Tipu the territories that each possessed at the end of the war. The Nizam, who was afraid of Maratha aggression, agreed; the Marathas, who meant to attack Hyderabad, refused.

Lord Cornwallis left India in October 1793, his last act before he sailed from Madras being to ensure the annexation of the French settlements. He was succeeded by Sir John Shore, a first-class civil servant who had done excellent settlement work. But he had little initiative and no political foresight and he could see no danger in the alliance just concluded against Hyderabad by the Marathas and Mysore. He maintained an insecure, impolitic and none too honourable peace <sup>3</sup> while the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. II. footnote on pp. 160-162, gives the general's story as he told it to Grant Duff.

<sup>2</sup> For an appreciation of Sindia see Grant Duff, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 227-229

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-224.

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Marathas, without the active co-operation of Tippu, defeated the Nizam in the hostilities of 1794 and 1795. These ended in the Nizam's surrender at Kharda, where two battalions of women troops, the Nizam's palace guard, "behaved no worse than the rest of his army."<sup>1</sup>

The Nizam was greatly incensed by what he held to be the evasion by the company of its engagements to help him. He dismissed the two English battalions which he subsidized, and had been unable to employ against the Marathas, and turned to the French, then ably represented in his army by the Gascon François de Raymond<sup>2</sup> whose men "carried the colours of the Republic . . . and the cap of liberty graced their buttons." Had it not been for the rebellion raised by the Nizam's son Ali Jah, which the English remained long enough in Hyderabad to suppress, the Nizam would have thrown himself entirely on the French side and come into alliance with Tipu.

After Kharda, Nana Farnavis reached the summit of his prosperity. Sindia's successor, and great-nephew, Daulat Rao, *Nana Farnavis*, supported him and he had no rivals in the confederacy, but his autocratic methods now brought about his temporary fall from power. His guardianship of the young Peshwa Madho Rao Narayan was so rigorous that, in October 1795, the young prince committed suicide. The sensation this caused broke the career of Nana Farnavis for a time and he was thrown into prison. The government became badly disorganized and it was not until the end of 1796 that Baji Rao II was recognized as Peshwa. Three years later Nana Farnavis was again chief minister, until his death in 1800. His chief defects were a lack of personal courage and an ambition not always restrained by principle; but none the less he was a great statesman and a true patriot, to whom Scott's lines on the younger Pitt might be applied. Politically he strongly opposed the English, while privately he admired their sincerity and the vigour of their government. For more than thirty years he controlled Maratha politics and with him, in the words of the Resident Colonel

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Bl... 's *Memoirs*, p. 213, footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Grant D... 's *History*, p. 242 and footnote.

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Palmer, "departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha government."<sup>1</sup>

Conditions in Oudh had been for years nothing short of scandalous.

*Oudh.* Under the so-called supervision of Sir John Macpherson corruption was even more flagrant than in the Carnatic; and it was described by Cornwallis as "a system of the dirtiest jobbing." The rule of Asaf-ud-daula consisted of squandering in debauchery the revenue wrung from his oppressed subjects; the company was bound to a policy of non-interference in internal affairs; and the only hope for the country had died in 1794, with its one capable minister Haidar Beg Khan.<sup>2</sup> Only the *jagirs* in Rohilkhand belonging to the Afghan family of Faizulla Khan were in a state of prosperity. These narrowly escaped complete confiscation by the Nawab, and were only partly saved by the prompt action of Sir Robert Abercromby.<sup>3</sup>

The hopeless inefficiency of the Nawab's army to resist foreign invasion was a standing menace to the security of the English north-west frontier which the company's forces in Oudh were not strong enough to defend themselves; and there was the prospect of invasion from the west. Shah Zaman had ascended the throne of Kabul in 1793, his mind filled with hopes of an Indian empire. At the beginning of 1797 he penetrated as far as Lahore with thirty thousand men, and although domestic disturbances, added to Sikh resistance, obliged him to retreat he was again in Lahore in the following year. The Sikhs with their young leader Ranjit Singh were a strong power in the Punjab, but as the Marathas under Daulat Rao Sindia, who was no friend to the English, occupied Agra and Delhi, the political outlook was distinctly menacing.

Asaf-ud-daula, who was suspected of underground dealings with Zaman Shah,<sup>4</sup> died in 1797. Idle, dissolute and cruel, he was, however, a man of cultured tastes. Three years before his death he built the impressive Imambarah, whose great gate far surpasses the entrance

<sup>1</sup> For his career see *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. Chs. XXVIII. XL., and for his character, *ibid.*, pp. 301, 302.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India* (2nd Edn. 1811), pp. 127-129.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 120, footnote.

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to the Sublime Porte at Constantinople, on which it is said to have been modelled.

He nominated as his successor a youth Vazir Ali, whom he recognized as his son, but whom Shore, after sanctioning the succession, discovered to be illegitimate and, moreover, quite unfit to govern. Although the Company's commander-in-chief and the officer commanding the English forces in Oudh represented the danger of reversing his decision, Shore had the courage to depose Vazir Ali, and personally instituted an uncle, Saadat Ali, as Nawab. In January 1798 a treaty was signed between Saadat Ali and the company which strengthened the north-western frontier of Bengal. In addition to an increase to seventy-six lakhs of the annual payment made to the company, an English garrison was placed in Allahabad; the company's troops in Oudh were brought up to 10,000 and made responsible for the entire defence of the country, and the Nawab agreed to have no dealings with other powers without the consent of the company's government.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the year, in anticipation of invasion by Zaman Shah, the company's forces in Oudh were raised to 20,000. But the invasion never took place. The Durrani king retired from India in 1799, so greatly impressed with the personality of Ranjit Singh who had helped him when in difficulties with his heavy artillery that he bestowed on the Sikh leader the royal investiture of Lahore.<sup>2</sup> The Company's north-west frontier gave no immediate cause for anxiety, but the internal affairs of Oudh threatened to be a source of trouble.

The general policy of Sir John Shore was, in the words of Thornton, essentially quiescent and, apart from his intervention in Oudh, he was only roused to action when he took the Dutch settlements in India and in the Indian Seas. The Dutch had been caught up in the war in Europe in 1795 by the establishment by revolutionary France of the Batavian Republic, and during that year the English sent expeditions to Malacca, Amboyna, Cochin and Ceylon,

*Capture of  
the Dutch  
Settlements*

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-229.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 119-120.



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all of which were taken. Negapatam and Trincomalee had been lost in the earlier war with Great Britain; Cochin was the only Dutch possession to offer any real resistance; and the British flag flew over Colombo for the first time on 16th February 1796.<sup>1</sup>

Sir John Shore, who had been raised to an Irish peerage as Lord Teignmouth, left India in March 1798.

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of Ceylon, a Crown Colony since 1798, and its relation to British policy, see *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Development of the British Connection

AFTER some hesitation in the choice of a successor to Teignmouth, Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, was appointed, and took over charge in May 1798. Lord Mornington became Marquis Wellesley after the fall of Seringapatam, and it avoids confusion to refer to him as Lord Wellesley throughout his administration. With the exception of Lord Curzon no British Governor-General or Viceroy came out from England with a greater knowledge of India. He had been a member of the Board of Control for five years, and had closely studied Indian history and literature.<sup>1</sup>

The political outlook was stormy. Oudh was insecure in the hands of Saadat Ali Khan. Berar was hostile. The triple alliance formed by Cornwallis against Mysore had been dissolved. A French party was paramount at the courts of the Nizam and of Daulat Rao Sindia, who was all powerful at Poona. Tipu Sultan in active correspondence with the French, with Kabul, Persia and Turkey, was on the brink of open hostility. To add to the Governor-General's anxieties, not only were the revenues of the Carnatic mortgaged to its creditors (some of whom were actually members of the Madras Council) but the finances of the company were drained by the expeditions against the Dutch colonies, which had stripped the Coromandel coast of troops.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Wellesley's policy was to renew the defensive alliance with Hyderabad and the Marathas, and temporize as far as possible with Mysore. He made a treaty with the Nizam by which the French battalions, totalling 14,000 men, were disbanded; and the

<sup>1</sup> *The Marquis Wellesley*, Hutton, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, pp. 229, 230, 233, 234.

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force under English command substituted for them was the germ of the Hyderabad contingent.<sup>1</sup> The Peshwa's government did not consent to a similar arrangement, but agreed to join a league against Mysore.

Tipu was requested to disarm and abandon the alliance he had just made with France. The Sultan made evasive replies and Lord Wellesley determined to strike before the French could intervene. In February 1799 he declared war.<sup>2</sup> On 3rd March General Harris crossed the frontier with the main army of company and Hyderabad troops. A few days later General Stuart with the Bombay division defeated a Mysore army at Coorg; and on 27th March Harris defeated Tipu, who had concentrated his forces at Malavelli to bar the way to his capital. Seringapatam was stormed on 4th May, when Tipu was killed. The governor-general's brother, Arthur Wellesley, then a young colonel of thirty, took command on the following day when the troops were sacking the town completely out of hand. He reported that he hoped "to have gained the confidence of the people" by the rapid and effective measures he took to restore order.

Tipu Sultan was a man of undoubted gifts, but these were outweighed by innate suspicion and diabolical cruelty. He was a good linguist, hard-working and endowed with an imagination which evolved an entirely new calendar, a novel scale of weights and measures and coinage of his own invention. A convinced Muhammadan, who persecuted the Hindu population over whom he ruled, yet he had recourse to the prayers of the Brahmans in times of crisis. England has had enemies more able and more formidable than Tipu, yet never one more bitter or more implacable. But, unfortunately for himself, his "ardent desire to expel the English nation from India"<sup>3</sup> was not guided by a vestige of political insight. It was said in Mysore "that Haidar was born to create an empire, Tipu to lose one," and Tipu Sultan, in

<sup>1</sup> Colonel (Sir John) Malcolm saw the disbandment, as assistant political officer at Hyderabad. For the Hyderabad Contingent see Note 1 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-243, gives full details of the campaign.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, p. 253.

spite of the plainest warnings, persisted in a policy which could only end in his utter ruin. In a campaign lasting only two months the Moslem power in Mysore was shattered.

Lord Wellesley had not expected so complete a collapse of Mysore and he had now to consider the future of the country. The Marathas, who had taken no part in the campaign and refused to enter into any subsequent covenant, were left out of account. The governor-general decided that the company and the Nizam should take over the districts which best suited their respective governments and that the old Hindu reigning family, expelled by Tipu's father Haidar Ali, should be restored, to revive, in a limited measure, the ancient kingdom of Vijayanagar. Kanara was annexed by the company, Seringapatam was retained and the whole of the south-western coast was now under English control. The Nizam was given the north-eastern districts of Tipu's dominions. Mysore State, now completely cut off from the sea, was made over to a minor, Kistna Raja. Purnea, a Brahman of great ability and reputation, who had been Tipu's financial minister, became chief minister of the new Hindu government. The treaties confirming these arrangements were concluded in July 1799. Mysore, which the British Government was obliged to administer, from 1831 until 1881 owing to misrule, is now under its maharaja one of the best-governed of the Indian States.

The fourth Mysore war annihilated an enemy whose existence in the south had been a constant danger to the company and, by giving the English complete command of the sea-coast of the lower peninsula, greatly lessened any risk of serious French intervention.

The Governor-General was now free to pursue his forward policy, by peaceful annexations of territory and subsidiary treaties with other Indian States. In 1799 Lord Wellesley annexed Tanjore, which had been a Maratha State for about a hundred and fifty years. There had been a dispute over the succession, "native oppression and European cupidity"<sup>1</sup> had brought about endless abuses, and the Governor-General took

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-251.

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over the country, the youthful raja retiring on a pension which was continued until the line died out in 1855. Tanjore had been a source of serious trouble since 1766, when acute dissensions over its affairs broke out in the Madras council, culminating in the arrest of the Governor Lord Pigot who died while in confinement.<sup>1</sup>

During the same year internal disputes at Surat induced the Company to take possession of the castle and fleet at that port, an action which Shah Alam II confirmed by authorizing the English to act there as his vice-regent. The imperial standard<sup>2</sup> remained over the castle and on the company's flagship in the harbour until May 1800, when the failure of the local administration, and communal disturbances between Hindus and Muhammadans, decided the company to annex Surat by treaty and bring it into the Bombay Presidency.<sup>3</sup>

But by far the most important increase of territory was the annexation of the Carnatic in 1801, which consolidated the Madras presidency substantially as it is today. Muhammad Ali had died in 1795 at the age of seventy-eight. His long life had been a series of intrigues punctuated by financial crises which had made the fortunes of disreputable creditors such as Paul Benfield, who went home to become a member of Parliament.<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Ali was succeeded by his son Umdat-ul-Umara under whom, as in the time of his father, the Carnatic continued to be hopelessly and helplessly misgoverned.

Nor had the situation been improved by the treaty made by Cornwallis in 1792. This treaty had set up a form of dual government, the company taking entire control of the Carnatic in time of war, and restoring it to the Nawab in time of peace. Conditions were added to ensure the payment of the subsidy to the company and to make a composition with Muhammad Ali's creditors. These arrangements had made efficient administration by the Carnatic

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-153.

<sup>2</sup> A note on Indian and English standards and colours is to be found at the end of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 57, 161, 181, 182 describe the "pecuniary" distresses of the Nawab and the "financial jugglery" of Benfield.

government quite impossible. In order to raise money to meet his obligations the Nawab mortgaged his districts at usurious interest to Europeans. These creditors came to terms with the military authorities who helped them to enforce their claims in the districts, and the peasants had recourse to money-lenders who completed their ruin. Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras in 1794, protested against this oppression and represented that the company's policy of non-interference, under the terms of the treaty, was discrediting the British Government, but the new Nawab, under the thumb of the mortgagees, refused to modify the treaty. The view of the home government was, however, completely changed by the discovery of documentary evidence, on the fall of Seringapatam, that Muhammad Ali and his son had been intriguing with Tipu against the English.<sup>1</sup> In the cipher correspondence the English were referred to as "New comers," the Nizam as "Nothing" and the Marathas as "The Contemptibles." The rulers of the Carnatic had themselves violated the treaty and when Umdat-ul-Amara died in 1801 the Carnatic was annexed by the company, and the Nawab's heirs were given a liberal pension.<sup>2</sup>

In Oudh Lord Wellesley combined annexations with what may be called a subsidiary treaty. Saadat Ali had been placed on the throne by the English but "the British subsidy was always in arrears, while the most frightful extortion was practised in the realization of the revenue. Justice was unknown; the army was a disorderly mass, formidable only to the power whom it professed to serve. These evils of native growth were aggravated by an extraordinary number of European adventurers, most of whom were as destitute of character and principle as they were of property."<sup>3</sup>

The Governor-General saw clearly that the two essentials of military security and civil reform were impossible under the existing vicious and incompetent government and from the first he

<sup>1</sup> Summarized by Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, pp. 335-338.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-261; and *Camb. Hist. Brit. Empire*, Vol. IV, pp. 355-359.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

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showed little patience or forbearance in his dealings with Saadat Ali. By the agreement of November 1801 in which Lord Wellesley's brother Henry Wellesley took part, the ruler of Oudh ceded all his frontier provinces, including Rohilkhand, to the company; the revenue of these territories being taken as equivalent to the subsidy payable for troops. This arrangement to which Saadat Ali only agreed with the greatest reluctance ended the buffer-state policy which had served its purpose for thirty years.

The company now owned the whole belt of frontier territory and Oudh was encircled by the English dominion. These annexations of some of the richest and most populous districts in the heart of India, along the Ganges and its tributaries above Benares up to the foot-hills of the Himalaya, greatly increased the company's revenue; Allahabad became a flourishing trade centre and started upon its modern career of prosperity. At the same time the English came in contact with the Maratha chief Sindia along the whole line of his possessions in Upper India.

In the internal administration of Oudh Saadat Ali agreed to introduce, under his own officers, a system of government more conducive to the prosperity and security of his subjects, and to follow in all respects the advice of the officers of the company's government.<sup>1</sup> In this and the other subsidiary treaties there were grave defects. "The company was made responsible for the maintenance of a government which it was impossible for its representatives, as foreigners, entirely to control. The Carnatic no doubt had a new and happy future; but in Oudh the snake of oppression was only scotched. . . . But of the great aims, the high conscientiousness, the keen insight and the impressive wisdom of Marquis Wellesley in these, the most characteristic expressions of his statesmanship, there can be no doubt."

In their earliest dealings with the Indian powers the company had intervened by lending troops to some ruler. Later they used their own troops assisted more or less by the ill-trained and undisciplined levies of their allies. A further advance was made when the Indian ally

*The Subsidiary  
Treaties*

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-331.

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was asked to pay a subsidy with which the English raised, trained and paid the necessary forces themselves. But the subsidies were often in arrears, and the next stage was to adopt the usual practice of Asiatic governments and obtain the assignment of lands upon whose revenue the troops were maintained.

Lord Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliances, the first of which had been made by Vansittart with Mir Kasim in 1760, was to establish protectorates over the States with which his government had contact. By these treaties the princes agreed to reduce their own military establishments and, while continuing to manage their internal affairs without interference, relied upon the English for external defence and internal security.<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis had tried and failed to bring universal peace to India by a series of treaties of general guarantee. Lord Wellesley hoped to bring about this result by establishing the company's ascendancy in the councils of the Indian States.

Lord Wellesley concluded a treaty on these lines with the newly restored Hindu State of Mysore. In 1800 a subsidiary alliance was made with Hyderabad. By this treaty the Nizam commuted his military subsidy to the company by ceding the territories he had gained in 1792 and 1799 from Mysore; and, while putting the control of his foreign policy in the company's hands, he agreed that in the event of any dispute between his government and another Indian power he would accept the arbitration of the company.

Mysore, Hyderabad and Oudh were now safe from French influence, and the only powers of importance with which Lord Wellesley had to deal were the Maratha States. He had raised a barrier against their aggressions by subsidiary treaties with the Moslem rulers, but the general character of the Marathas and the number of French officers in Sindia's service were disquieting elements and he determined to secure a commanding influence in the confederacy councils. Lord Wellesley soon found his opportunity.

*Lord Wellesley's  
Maratha Policy.*

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. Brit. Empire*, Vol. IV. Ch. XXI, p. 354.



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The death of Nana Parnavis in 1800 was the signal for a scramble for power among the confederacy chiefs, and fiendish executions, and the butchery and confusion of unbridled civil war broke loose between the main rivals, Jaswant Rao Holkar and Sindia. The Peshwa Baji Rao, cruel and vindictive when he had the means to strike, was helpless to assert his personal authority. The civil war went on with varying fortunes until 25th October 1802, when Holkar met the forces of Sindia near Poona. Divisions of both armies were led by Englishmen but Holkar's forces were superior, and after a desperate engagement Sindia was completely defeated,<sup>1</sup> and Holkar established his nominee Warnak Rao, as Peshwa at Poona.

Baji Rao, whose sympathies had been with Sindia, lost no time in reopening with the English negotiations by which *Treaty of Bassein.* he had already agreed to maintain a force of Company's troops in his territory. On the 31st December 1802 he signed the treaty of Bassein. It was violently criticized by the home authorities on the obvious grounds that it trebled British responsibilities in Western India; and it was to draw the Maratha chiefs together to resist the foreigner. But its far-reaching results have been described by Sidney Owen: "Previously to the Treaty there existed a British Empire in India: the Treaty by its direct or indirect operations gave the Company the Empire of India."<sup>2</sup>

By the terms of the treaty a subsidiary force of 6000 infantry with European artillery units was to be permanently stationed in the Peshwa's dominions, and these troops were to act with his own forces in the event of war; no European of a nation hostile to the English was to be entertained; districts yielding 26 lakhs of rupees were to be assigned for the upkeep of the subsidiary force; the Peshwa abandoned his claims on Surat; he agreed to arbitration in his disputes with Hyderabad and Baroda; and he bound himself to engage in no hostilities with other States, nor to negotiate with any power whatever without previous consultation with the company's government.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marathas*, Vol. II. pp. 316-317.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to *Selections from the Wellington Despatches*, p. xlv.

<sup>3</sup> The nineteen articles of the treaty are quoted by Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.

Up to this point the policy by which Lord Wellesley hoped to establish peace throughout India had developed with unbroken success. The company's subsidiary troops were stationed at Mysore, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Poona; all disputes between these States were to be submitted to the governor-general for arbitration; while the interference of other European nations was to be excluded.

Arthur Wellesley went so far as to admit that the treaty of Bassein was "the bond of peace to India." It was, however, to be peace through war. The Peshwa had "sacrificed his independence as the price of protection," and he regretted the bargain almost as soon as he had made it. Sindia realized that a life and death struggle with the English was imminent and certain and, while Holkar held aloof, he joined hands with Raghuji Bhonsla the Maratha ruler of Berar.

Baji Rao had been for three months under Arthur Wellesley's protection at Poona when, on the 3rd August 1803, the British agent left Sindia's camp and the Maratha war opened. The governor-general's objects were to conquer Sindia's dominions between the Ganges and Jumna, taking Delhi and Agra; to remove the old Mogul Emperor Shah Alam from Sindia's control; to annex Baroch in Western India; and in the east to join Madras with Bengal by annexing the province of Cuttack. To effect this the company had nearly 50,000 men in India, and General Arthur Wellesley was able to take the field with 24,000 men, while General Lake in the north had 10,000 under his command.

Sindia and the Bhonsla raja of Berar mustered between them 50,000 cavalry and over 30,000 regular infantry with great strength in artillery, commanded by the Frenchmen Perron (the successor of de Boigne) and Dudrenac; and the Berar levies equipped with matchlocks and rockets brought the Maratha forces up to about 100,000 men. The army of Sindia at this time (and the same remark applies to Holkar) consisted of comparatively few Marathas, being chiefly composed of Rajputs and Muhammadans enlisted in what had been the original Mogul Empire. This, as

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Malcolm points out, was a radical cause of Maratha division and ruin.<sup>1</sup>

On the 12th August 1803 General Wellesley took Ahmadnagar, which was supposed to be practically impregnable. *Assaye and Argaon.* On 23rd September with no more than 4500 of his army he met the forces of Sindia and Berar, 50,000 strong with over 100 guns, at Assaye. He attacked without hesitation, the troops advancing under a very hot fire, and won a complete victory.<sup>2</sup> Wellesley displayed in this, his first general action, the same matter-of-fact coolness which distinguished him in his last great battle. A famous incident at Waterloo had its counterpart at Assaye when, at a critical moment, a British cavalry regiment (19th Light Dragoons), with the 4th Native Cavalry,<sup>3</sup> passed through the cheering ranks of a Highland regiment (the 74th) to charge the enemy.<sup>4</sup> In the course of a brilliant campaign through the Deccan Arthur Wellesley went on to win a decisive battle over the raja of Berar at Argaon on 29th November, and in the middle of December he forced that prince to sign the treaty of Deogaon, similar in terms to the treaty of Bassein, and ceding Cuttack to the company.

In upper India General Lake's division was opposed to Sindia's troops drilled on French lines. *Lake's Campaign.* On 11th September Lake won a victory outside Delhi which gave him the capital of Mogul India. Agra surrendered five weeks later, and on the 31st October Sindia's remaining forces were annihilated after a desperate battle at Laswari. On 30th December 1803 Sindia signed the treaty of Surji Arjangaon, ceding the country

<sup>1</sup> *Sketch of the Political History in India*, pp. 402-403 and footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Wellesley's Despatches*, III. pp. 323-326 (ed. Montgomery Martin, London, 1840).

<sup>3</sup> General Sir John Floyd, commanding officer of the 19th Light Dragoons, "had from the day of his arrival in India, laboured to establish the ties of mutual and cordial regard between the European and the native soldiers. His success was complete . . . and the friendship which he established . . . was after his departure consummated upon the plains of Assaye."—*Quarterly Review*, Vol. XVIII (May 1818), p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> Accounts of Assaye and Argaon are given in *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. pp. 340-343, and pp. 358, 359.

between the Jumna and the Ganges, his rights over Broach and other territories.<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor since his move from Allahabad to Delhi had known nothing but misfortune and misery. In 1788, after the defeat of Sindia by a combined Rajput and Mogul army, he had fallen into the clutches of a savage Rohilla, Ghulam Qadir, who blinded him and treated the imperial household with barbarous cruelty. A year later Sindia recovered the capital, together with the provinces of Delhi and Agra, took a fearful revenge on the usurper Ghulam Qadir, and resumed his custody of the Emperor. When Perron became commandant of the fort at Delhi Shah Alam was handed over to the French from whom as from Sindia he met with neither kindness nor generosity. Old, blind and decrepit, without power, without pomp or state or retinue, the representative of the house of Timur came finally under the protection of the English when Lake entered Delhi.<sup>2</sup>

But the governor-general had not settled with the whole strength of the confederacy. Holkar, who had stayed inactive in Rajputana with a large Maratha horde while Sindia and the Raja of Berar were fighting the English, refused to come to terms. He was pillaging and levying contributions in the country, he had recently put to death three English officers in his service, and in April 1804 Lord Wellesley declared war. At first all went well. Rampura, Holkar's stronghold in the north was taken and Holkar made a rapid retreat. But Lake, ignoring Arthur Wellesley's advice either to follow him up energetically or withdraw altogether during the rainy season, took half-hearted measures which ended in disaster. A force under Colonel Monson was completely defeated in the Mukund Dara Pass in Rajputana between the 8th and 11th July 1804. Sindia's contingent deserted, and the survivors of the English force had the greatest difficulty in reaching Agra a fortnight later.

The immediate effect of the disaster was to hearten the Marathas,

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 345-355, 361, 362. But the subsidiary treaty referred to by Grant Duff was withdrawn later.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-290.

bringing Sindia and the Bhonsla once more into alliance against the English, and it determined the home Government to recall Lord Wellesley.

But the reverse was only momentary. Colonel Murray, whose operations had previously been hesitating, captured Holkar's capital Indore, and Holkar himself was unable to take Delhi, gallantly defended for a week in October by a handful of Indian troops under Ochterlony. On 13th November General Frazer severely defeated Holkar at Dig, twenty miles from Laswari, and three days later Lake cut to pieces a force of Maratha cavalry south of Delhi. These successes were, however, counterbalanced by Lake's unfortunate and expensive failure between 4th January and 21st February 1805 to take Bharatpur, whose ruler had deserted the English and joined forces with Holkar.<sup>1</sup> A convention was made with the Raja of Bharatpur in April by which he retained his fortress and the Maratha campaign drifted on without decisive result.

Peace was finally concluded by Lord Wellesley's successor in accordance with a policy of ill-judged concession which failed to realize that Holkar's power had really been broken and that no Maratha prince was left strong enough to withstand the English. Weak allied States like Jaipur which relied on the company's support were by this policy at the mercy of their rapacious neighbours, and the final reckoning with the Marathas was postponed.

Lord Wellesley's policy had dissolved the last of the European-trained armies possessed by the Indian rulers,<sup>2</sup> and substituted, for these forces under foreign commanders, contingents amounting to 22,000 men paid for by the States and under the Company's control. Arbitration by the English between the Indian powers when inter-State differences arose had been established. British dominion had been almost incredibly increased. Finally, by taking charge of the Mogul

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 381-383.

<sup>2</sup> *Sketch of the Political History of India*, Malcolm, pp. 361-363, for French military influence in 1798.

Emperor and his family, Lord Wellesley had inaugurated a change of policy which lasted until 1857. As Sir Alfred Lyall has said: "For at least forty years the imperial sign manual had been at the disposal of any adventurer or usurper . . . who could overawe the powerless court and dictate his own investiture with some lofty office or with a grant of the provinces that he had appropriated."<sup>1</sup> When Lord Wellesley made Shah Alam a State pensioner this was no longer possible.

Lord Wellesley's political horizon was not bound by the shores of India. He saw that if the French were successful in Egypt they would make an attempt upon Southern India. In February 1801 he sent troops under General Baird to co-operate in the Egyptian campaign; and had Admiral Rainier followed his instructions Mauritius would have been captured and the serious losses caused to British shipping by French privateers would have been ended. Ceylon had become a crown colony in 1798, at first under the supervision of the governor-general of India. But the rule of its governor Frederick North (Lord Guilford) was not fortunate, and Lord Wellesley asked, without success, that the island should be brought directly under the Indian Government.

Cornwallis had fully realized his responsibility in regard to the condition and treatment of the Company's Indian subjects. When the officers of a court-martial acquitted one of their comrades charged with the brutal assault of a poor Indian in the teeth of the clearest evidence, he reprimanded the offenders in a scathing minute,<sup>2</sup> which might have been written by Lord Curzon.

Lord Wellesley realized a further obligation. The development of the company had raised its servants from clerks and merchants to magistrates and administrators; they were in fact Indian civil servants in all but name. They came out to India as boys, ignorant of their duties and of the history and languages of the peoples whom they would have to rule. They had no incentive to learn and their incompetence frequently led to idleness and bad habits. Lord Wellesley therefore founded a college

Fort William  
College.

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 229-234.

<sup>2</sup> *The Marquess Cornwallis*, Seton-Karr, pp. 112, 113.

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at Fort William, modelled as closely as possible on an English university, where Oriental languages and Indian law and customs were taught. The scheme was as warmly approved by Warren Hastings as that great administrator's own proposal to establish a professorship of Persian had been supported by Dr. Johnson, though neither scheme was welcomed by the authorities in London. The Calcutta college was vetoed by the directors who, however, yielded to pressure and arranged that Indian languages should be taught at the headquarters of each presidency. But it caused the foundation in 1806 of the East India College at Haileybury which gave for nearly fifty years a training upon the lines laid down by Lord Wellesley for the college in India.<sup>1</sup>

The directors in London had never approved of the governor-general's forward policy, which they felt had led to an increase of territory too great for profitable management. The course of affairs in Oudh, the Bassein treaty, the heavy expenses of the government, and other matters of which they disapproved all urged the directors to dismiss a Governor-General who was as insubordinate as he was brilliant in achievement. They also accused him of abusing his patronage, selecting as instances his employment of his brothers, Henry, afterwards famous as Lord Cowley, British Ambassador at Paris, and Arthur the future Duke of Wellington. Lord Wellesley had sent in his resignation in 1802, but the directors had refused to accept it; he could not then be replaced. The disaster to Colonel Monson's column in the Maratha war brought them to a decision, and the Governor-General was recalled in 1805, in the hope of "bringing things back to the state the legislature had prescribed in 1793." The proposal to impeach Lord Wellesley after his return to England was not pressed.

Thornton<sup>2</sup> takes the view that the one defect in the governor-general's character was "ambition . . . in connecting his own fame with that of the land to which he belonged, and of the government which he administered." But his policy of securing "to

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-277 (and see Seton-Karr's *Life of Marquis Wellesley*, pp. 117-124).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 341.

every State the unmolested exercise of its separate authority within the limits of its established dominion, under the general protection of the British power,"<sup>1</sup> was the beginning of the *Pax Britannica* in India.

On the 1st August 1805 the Marquess Cornwallis, in his sixty-seventh year and "drooping under age and infirmities" took office as governor-general for the second time. He came to Calcutta to reverse his successor's policy and he was supported by the alarm which Wellesley's costly and masterful operations had caused in England. Cornwallis died in three months, but he had already laid down the principles on which the Company's government were to act for the next ten years. Sir Alfred Lyall has defined this policy as the experiment of isolation. The consequent renunciations of treaty obligations to allied States and concessions to the Marathas is stigmatized by Thornton as inglorious and dishonourable.

Sir John Malcolm has recorded, with more restrained disapproval, the course of the governor-general's negotiations with Sindia, who had detained the English Resident and allowed his camp to be plundered. Lake urged in vain that if Cornwallis persisted in his proposals to withdraw the company's protection from the small States west of the Jumna they would be overwhelmed by Sindia, or some other Maratha chief, a breach of faith which would dishonour the reputation of England.<sup>2</sup> But the governor-general, old and dying as he was, clung to his policy of peace with the Marathas at any price, even to the "mere point of honour" involved in the release of the resident.<sup>3</sup> He decided to give up Gwalior and Gohad to Sindia, with the districts of Dholpur, Bari and Rajkeri making the Jumna the English frontier; to abandon the company's ally Jaipur; and to give the Maratha bandits a free hand.

Cornwallis died at Ghazipur on the 5th October 1805, where

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of Lord Wellesley, 13th July 1804, *Wellesley Despatches*, IV. p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, pp. 391-408. The author was then the governor-general's political agent.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-343.



he lies in a monument described in the *Gazetteer of India* as "a domed quasi-Grecian building." Sir John Malcolm says of Lord Cornwallis: "To a dignified simplicity of character, he added a soundness of understanding and a strength of judgment which admirably fitted him for the exercise of both civil and military power; and his first Administration of the British Empire in India must ever be a theme of just and unqualified applause."<sup>1</sup>

When Cornwallis died, the first member of council, Sir George Barlow, acted as governor-general until a new appointment was made in England. Thornton describes him as "an excellent revenue officer with none of the qualities of a governor-general." Like Cornwallis he disapproved of the subsidiary treaties, but to give him his due he upheld the treaty of Bassein and did not pursue his policy of non-interference when dealing with the Peshwa and the Nizam of Hyderabad.<sup>2</sup> But he dissolved the agreement which had been made with the Sikhs, and he abandoned the Rajput princes by binding the company's government, in his treaty with Sindia (November 1805), to make no engagement with them for their protection against the Marathas. In regard to this treaty Barlow made the cynical remark that "the British possessions in the Doab will derive additional security from the contests of the neighbouring States."<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the words of Thornton, "did Sir George Barlow tranquillize India."

In the spring of 1806 symptoms of insubordination appeared among the Company's Indian troops in the Carnatic; and on 10th July a mutiny broke out at Vellore. *The Vellore Mutiny.* Two English companies with their officers, a total of 113 of all ranks, were massacred, and order was only restored by British and Indian cavalry regiments from Arcot. The chief ringleaders were executed and the other mutineers were dismissed the service, the battalions which mutinied were disbanded<sup>4</sup> and the

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> *Political History of India, 1784-1823*, Malcolm, Vol. I. pp. 373-385.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-348.

<sup>4</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-354.

family of Tippu Sultan, who were suspected of complicity, were removed from Vellore to Calcutta.

The immediate cause of the mutiny was to be attributed to the dress regulations issued by the presidency commander-in-chief Sir John Cradock, with the approval of the governor of Madras Lord William Bentinck. These regulations required the men to wear a new pattern of head-dress to which the Muhammadans objected, to train their beards in a particular way, and forbade the Hindus to put caste marks on their foreheads.

Among the peoples of India religion has always been the supremely vital force. They had been accustomed in the past to the violence of conversions to Islam. But as Sir John Cradock, commenting upon "the total absence of [English] religious establishments in the interior of the country," said, "So infrequent are the religious observances of officers doing duty with battalions, that the sepoys have not, until very recently, discovered the nature of the religion professed by the English."<sup>1</sup> Christianity was in fact then regarded by Indians rather as an impure mode of life, associated with the wearing of hats, the eating of beef and pork, the drinking of spirits and the neglect of personal purity, than as a system of lofty theological doctrine.<sup>2</sup> The folly of the Madras government in interfering with the religious susceptibilities of the Indian troops was absolutely wanton, especially as there existed in the districts a strong though utterly groundless fear that a general destruction of caste and forcible conversion to Christianity were contemplated.<sup>3</sup>

The directors in London recalled the governor who had successfully urged clemency to the mutineers, and the commander-in-chief who advocated sterner measures, while they recorded their views on conditions in India to the President of the Board of Control. Apart from criticism of Lord Wellesley's forward policy they said that the general decline of the fidelity of the army and of the attachment of the people to British rule was due to the fact that a new class of men with little knowledge of India, little interest in its

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-1858*, Kaye, Vol. I. Book II. Ch. I. *The Sepoy Army (1756-1856)*, p. 250 and footnote

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History of India*, p. 610.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRITISH CONNECTION

inhabitants, and little toleration for their prejudices had begun to monopolize the chief seats in the government and the chief posts in the army.<sup>1</sup>

In the meanwhile the question of the governor-generalship was being warmly discussed between the directors and the Whig coalition government of Grenville and Fox, which had come in after the death of Pitt. *Appointment of Lord Minto.* The directors wished Barlow, who had succeeded in turning a financial deficit into a surplus, to remain, and while Pitt lived, Lord Minto (who had recently become President of the Board of Control) supported the proposal. Lord Grenville, however, exercised the prerogative of the Crown under the Act of 1784 and "vacated" the appointment. After considerable debate in the House of Commons the directors, who had refused to accept "citizen Maitland" Lord Lauderdale, agreed to Minto's nomination.<sup>2</sup> Minto had, as a friend of Burke, been long interested in India, and had conducted Impey's unsuccessful impeachment. But he had refused the governorship of Madras in 1793, and it was with the greatest reluctance that he accepted the post of governor-general.<sup>3</sup> He reached Calcutta at the end of July 1807, and found the country "in that state of torpor which Sir George Barlow and his friends regarded as tranquillity."<sup>4</sup>

The first event to disturb this calm was a violent outbreak in Travancore at the end of 1808. Travancore was, at that time, scandalously misgoverned by its chief minister who was actively hostile to the English. The subsidy due from that State to the company was heavily in arrears and the minister made the pressure brought to bear upon his government to pay this money the pretext for a general rising and an attack upon the residency. Order was quickly restored on the appearance of the company's troops, the minister committed suicide, and the

<sup>1</sup> Kaye, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-358.

<sup>3</sup> For Lord Minto's Parliamentary interest in India see *Life and Letters*, edited by his great-niece the Countess of Minto (London), 1874, I. pp. 121, 175, 176, 179, etc.; III. pp. 392-397.

<sup>4</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

future peace of the principality was placed upon a firmer foundation than it had rested before.

A more serious threat to British security in India than the disturbances in Travancore came from the mutiny of the British officers of the Madras army. Discontent had shown itself in 1807, and when Barlow became governor of the presidency after the arrival of Minto in India, and abolished a tent contract from which commanding officers made money, the smouldering discontent broke into mutiny in 1809. From the garrison in Travancore it spread to Hyderabad, Masulipatam and Seringapatam. Fortunately a sense of duty soon returned, and the mutiny was suppressed. General McDowall, the late commander-in-chief at Madras, whose farewell "offensive and inflammatory" general order had much to do with the outbreak, escaped well-deserved punishment, the ship in which he sailed to England being lost with all hands.<sup>1</sup>

Although Minto's administration marks an almost stationary period in the growth of British power in India, the governor-general clearly saw, and impressed upon the authorities in England, that it was impossible to remain entirely neutral in India, the policy which they had made up their minds to follow. He paved the way, slowly and deliberately, for the forward policy of his successors. At the same time he began a new phase of British-Indian diplomacy by widespread relations with powers beyond the borders of India.

The treaty of Tilsit in 1807 had made Napoleon master of the continent of Europe, and the French Emperor was pressing upon Alexander of Russia his plan of a joint expedition through Turkey and Persia against the English in India, in order to ruin their commercial prosperity. An imposing French mission was sent to Persia, and the agents of France were busy at other Asiatic courts.

Lord Minto prepared for this possible danger by setting up barriers in the form of alliances with the States on the threatened

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 362-364.

line of invasion. In India itself he sent Metcalfe to Lahore in 1808, and early in 1809 treaties were signed with the Sikhs by which Ranjit Singh's supremacy beyond the Sutlej was acknowledged, and the Sikh confederacies south of that river came under British protection, while their independence was admitted.<sup>1</sup> A mission was also sent to Sind, whose chiefs bound themselves "not to allow the establishment of the tribe of the French" in their country.<sup>2</sup>

A defensive alliance against France was made with the King of Kabul by Elphinstone.<sup>3</sup> But Shah Shuja was deposed soon afterwards and became a pensioner of the company, to be restored thirty years later by "an ill-fated expedition that eventually cost the English an army and a king his life." A mission to Persia, undertaken by Sir John Malcolm, arrived there about the same time as the plenipotentiary from England, Sir Harford Jones, who concluded a defensive treaty with the Iran government.

The value of these external alliances was shortlived. Napoleon's difficulties in Spain and with Russia soon ended his hopes of conquest in Asia. Within six years the French empire was overthrown, the command of the sea was held by Great Britain and, until Russia carried her frontiers eastwards in 1828 after her war with Persia, all danger of a possible invasion of India disappeared. Napoleon's schemes had, however, widened the British outlook as regards India. The north-west frontier<sup>4</sup> was no longer the kingdom of Oudh and its ceded territories; the buffer State was represented by the Cis-Sutlej confederacies. And, far beyond the confines of India, since the beginning of the nineteenth century the immensity of British interests in India has decisively influenced the relations of the home Government, not only with the Asiatic powers but with any

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 136-141. The Terms of these important treaties are given in full in Appendices XXV and XXVI.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. 1. p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> The name North-Western Provinces, which disappeared in 1902 when the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh came under one lieutenant-governor, is a reminder of the older boundaries of British dominion.

European State which could in any way affect the British position in the East.<sup>1</sup>

While a general peace policy was insisted upon in London, the governor-general, outside India, showed both energy and ability. Public opinion in England influenced Minto to ignore the outrages of the Pindari horsemen of Central India and Gurkha incursions to the Sutlej and the Jumna.<sup>2</sup> But the expeditions he sent overseas were the most brilliant and valuable achievements of his government.

With the co-operation of a British squadron Bourbon was taken in the summer of 1810, and at the beginning of December Mauritius capitulated. This put an end to the enterprise of the French privateers based on these islands which had cost the company more than two million pounds. Bourbon was restored to the French by the Peace of Paris of 1814.

In 1811 an expedition under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, commander-in-chief at Madras, after heavy fighting took the Dutch settlements in the Moluccas, then under French control, the capital Batavia falling on 28th August. The Moluccas were given back in 1814.

An Act of 1807 had given the governors and councils at Madras and Bombay authority to make regulations, subject to the approval of the supreme court, similar to those already vested in the government of Bengal, and the same powers of appointing justices of the peace. But the most important legislation of the period was the Charter Act of 1813. A searching inquiry into Indian affairs by a committee of the House of Commons had produced the famous Fifth Report in 1812. This was a standard authority on Indian land tenures and the judicial and police arrangements of the time comparable to the general survey made nearly a hundred and twenty years later by the statutory commission, under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon.

The House went into committee on the affairs of the East India

<sup>1</sup> See *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 238-245.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 134.

Company in March 1813. On the 13th July the Charter Bill was passed in the Commons and was opposed in the House of Lords only by Lord Lauderdale because it did not go far enough.

The Act renewed for twenty years the company's control of its territories and revenues "without prejudice to the undoubted sovereignty of the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." But subject to certain restrictions, its trade monopoly was abolished, except with China, and the highly valuable tea trade which was preserved to the company. The powers of the Board of Control were enlarged, although the company's patronage was continued. It was laid down that 20,000 men should be the maximum of king's troops normally maintained by the company, the Government in India making its own disciplinary arrangements. Provision was made out of the company's revenues for a bishop and three archdeacons of the Church of England at Calcutta (an equivalent proposal for the Established Church of Scotland being negatived); and permission was granted to "persons going to India to introduce amongst the natives useful knowledge and religious and moral improvement."<sup>1</sup>

This last clause, which aroused considerable discussion, was, as Professor Thakore points out,<sup>2</sup> the starting point in India of Christian missionary enterprise as licensed by the State, with its twin fruits of Western education and Christian propaganda; and it was safeguarded against interference with the religious convictions of the Indian people.

But the most violent controversy arose over the abolition of the trade monopoly, and the political dangers which were feared from an unlimited influx of Europeans into India.

The House heard the evidence called by the company to resist these proposals. Their first witness was Warren Hastings, then over eighty, who was received by the members rising in a body and standing until he had taken his seat within the bar. Lord Teignmouth, Colonel (Sir John) Malcolm and Colonel (Sir Thomas) Munro followed. Haworth made a powerful appeal in which he

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, pp. 72-79.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Administration* . . . (1765-1920).

emphasized the achievements of the company supported by its monopoly, while Tierney opposed its commercial policy on the grounds of its injustice to India. Grant reminded the House of its responsibilities in a peroration which may still be recalled, in spite of the intemperance and exaggeration of much of his speech.

"It is not my voice which you hear, it is the voice of sixty millions of your fellow-creatures . . . imploring you . . . not to make them the objects of perilous speculation, not to barter away their happiness for the sake of some insignificant local interests. . . . We are assembled to decide upon the fate of so many millions of human beings. . . . We are to them as another Providence; our sentence is to stamp the colour of their future years, and spread over the face of ages to come either misery or happiness . . . a glorious destiny for this country, but it is one of overwhelming responsibility. I trust that the question will be decided, not upon party principles, not upon trust, not upon vague theories, but upon sound practical policy, and with a view to the prosperity and preservation of our Indian Empire."<sup>1</sup>

Circumstances were too strong for the company, and the Bill became law. Napoleon had closed the European ports to English merchants by the Berlin decrees. Public opinion was growing in its support of free trade as presented by Adam Smith, and a petition from Sheffield urged that if the trade to the East Indies were thrown open the new and abundant markets would be certain to yield untold wealth to the manufacturers of England.<sup>2</sup> But Warren Hastings, when questioned in the House of Commons on the prospects of trade development, stated that "the requirements of the poor in India, that is to say the preponderating mass of the people, were confined to their dwellings, to their food, and to a scanty portion of clothing, all of which they can have from the soil that they tread upon."

The financial and economic policy of Great Britain towards India, and the trade relations between the two countries in the

<sup>1</sup> Taken from a summary of the debates given by Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 381-388.

<sup>2</sup> See *Indian Administration* . . . (1765-1920), Thakore, pp. 45-50.



latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth were influenced by two outstanding events: the industrial revolution in England and the war with France.

Up to this time India with her hand looms and stamps for printing cotton fabrics had supplied the markets of the world with her finer textiles. But the process of textile manufactures in England was completely revolutionized when the power loom was invented and the first steam spinning-mill set up in 1785. Among the English workers these innovations were unpopular to the point of incendiarism, and they led through commercial competition and the callous pursuit of profit to the shameful factory conditions prevalent in England during a deplorable period of the nineteenth century. In India they dealt the weaving industry a fatal blow. By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the markets had been almost wholly captured by the Lancashire manufacturers, while English cottons had found their way even into the bazaars of India. This was an inevitable result of the unequal fight between the handicraftsman and the machine product. At the same time the English mill-owners were afforded the protection of the Acts passed in 1781 and 1785 reinforcing the laws against the export of machines and tools used in the manufacture of textiles, and the sending out of workmen employed in iron and steel manufactures.<sup>1</sup> The company struggled hopelessly against this competition, importing cottons into England long after this branch of their trade ceased to be profitable. The average loss on piece-goods coming into the Port of London from India between 1789 and 1799 was estimated to exceed 15 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was this the only overwhelming handicap. England had followed a policy of protection since the Restoration and import duties had a tendency to increase. But the low cost of production in India allowed a good margin of profit to the company. Then in 1793 the prolonged hostilities began with revolutionary France and with Napoleon, and from that date until 1815 increasing

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 161-162

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

duties were levied to raise money for the war. To take an example: the import duties (warehouse and consumption) on bales of Indian plain calicoes rose from £23, 9s. 1d.<sup>1</sup> in 1800 to £85, 2s. 1d. in 1813<sup>2</sup>; while the value of cotton goods exported from England mainly to India rose from £156 in 1794 to £108,824 in the year ending 5th January 1813.<sup>3</sup> The value of Indian piece-goods sold for the company and private traders fell from £3,215,722 in 1798-99, to a quarter of this total ten years later,<sup>4</sup> and after 1818 this trade was practically extinct.<sup>5</sup>

In October 1813 Francis Hastings, Earl of Moira, succeeded Lord Minto and became governor-general and commander-in-chief. Three years later he was made Marquis of Hastings, the title by which it is more convenient to refer to him. He was nearly fifty-nine, and although he never went to the hills and habitually started work at four in the morning he ruled in India with wisdom and vigour for nine and a half years, a tenure only surpassed by Warren Hastings. The new governor-general found the state of affairs "far from gratifying." Finances were very low, and the army owing to shortage of money was discontented, inefficient and overworked.<sup>6</sup> Outside the company's ring-fence a large part of India was rapidly reaching a condition of chaos, and the energies of Lord Hastings had consequently to be devoted to external affairs.

The outstanding feature in India was the helplessness of its symbolic head, the Mogul Emperor. However ceremoniously the Nawab of Oudh or the Nizam of Hyderabad might obtain from the Emperor a formal confirmation of his accession and parade a conventional homage on his coinage, and in his public documents, there was not a prince in the country who obeyed the Emperor's orders, or paid him tribute or gathered an army in his defence. Mahadaji

Authority in  
the Empire

<sup>1</sup> To which £3 convoy duty was added

<sup>2</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, Table I (Appendix).

<sup>3</sup> Sir Romesh Dutt, *Economic History of British India*, quoting House of Commons Return of 4th May 1813.

<sup>4</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, Table III, quoting Milburn (*Oriental Commerce*, Vol. II. p. 235), for the years 1793-1794 to 1809-1810.

<sup>5</sup> *Trade Relations*, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

Sindia had used the imperial name to extend his own power; Tipu Sultan had openly declared his independence.

The emptiness of Mogul authority was equally apparent to the English. The company's servants, when at the head of affairs, had fallen into line with traditional Indian forms. But the dynasty of Parliamentary governors-general came to India with different ideas. Cornwallis would have nothing to do with any such "jargon of allegiance and obedience."<sup>1</sup> After Shah Alam came under the company's protection in 1803 Lord Wellesley was more courtly in his methods. But while he gave instructions that Shah Alam was to be accorded the forms of respect "due to the Emperors of Hindustan," the company's resident exercised control in Delhi under orders from Calcutta issued in Shah Alam's name. Lord Hastings definitely and finally extinguished "the fiction of the Mogul government." The inscription upon his seal no longer acknowledged that the governor-general was the servant of the Emperor; and when Akbar II, who had succeeded his father Shah Alam in 1806, desired an interview, Lord Hastings made it a condition that the ceremonial should be omitted which had in the past implied imperial supremacy over the company's dominions.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Hastings, moreover, encouraged the Nawab of Oudh to assume the title of king; and "terms of equality" between the Company's government and the King of Oudh were used in letters and treaties for many years to come. Sir William Lee Warner quotes a treaty of 1838 which "reads like a leaf taken out of the treaties of the preceding century."<sup>3</sup>

Certain great States such as Hyderabad, were under the Company's protection, but British policy had for ten years left almost the whole of Central India to take care of itself. Sindia, Holkar and the predatory leaders had a free hand, and among the Maratha States were

*Political Situation.* <sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, ed. Charles Ross, Vol. I. p. 558.

<sup>2</sup> *Private Diary of the Marquis of Hastings*. These references are quoted in the more accessible *Camb. Hist. Brit. Empire*, Vol. IV. pp. 602-607.

<sup>3</sup> *The Native States of India*, Edn. 1910, pp. 92, 93.

a number of petty feudatories in various stages of independence. The Marathas, whose power rested upon armies maintained by exactions upon their neighbours, were hostile to the English who had defeated them and were busy strengthening their forces. The situation was aggravated by bodies of thousands of Pindari freebooters and by the large number of soldiers who had been disbanded by the company's government and its allies. These fighting men poured from the pacified districts into the independent territories which Sir Alfred Lyall described as a kind of political Alsatia. The most formidable of the free companies was led by the notorious adventurer Amir Khan, who had given trouble to the company since 1805, when he sided with Holkar,<sup>1</sup> and had been fortunate to escape destruction four years later by an English force.<sup>2</sup> The Pindari freebooters, mounted on camels or ponies could move on occasion fifty miles in a day, and they inflicted fiendish tortures to wring money from their victims.<sup>3</sup> In 1814 Amir Khan was living upon Rajputana with a compact and disciplined army of at least 30,000 men and a number of guns.<sup>4</sup>

As some of the Rajput States represented to the British resident in Rajputana: "Some power in India had always existed to which peaceable States submitted, and in return obtained its protection against the invasions of upstart chiefs and the armies of lawless banditti; the British Government now occupied the place of that protecting power, and was the natural guardian of weak States which were continually exposed to the cruelties and oppression of robbers and plunderers, owing to the refusal of the British Government to protect them."<sup>5</sup>

This was perfectly true. A policy of insulation was totally inconsistent with the position of the company, which was a continental sovereignty carrying with it the moral responsibility to keep law and order. The home Government, hoping against hope, wished

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. I. pp. 403-405.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 424-426.

<sup>4</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe, then Resident in Rajputana, dated June 1816.

for peace and trusted to keep it by alliances with such States as had not as yet become predatory. But they saw that hostilities might become inevitable with the "large hordes of freebooters whose excesses appeared to increase with British forbearance."<sup>1</sup> Moreover the subsidiary treaties had justified the Duke of Wellington's view. They had weakened the feeling of responsibility of the rulers concerned and State government had deteriorated with the assurance of British protection in the event of attack or revolt; consequently in addition to treaty obligations of external defence the Company became increasingly responsible for internal order in the allied States.

Lord Hastings had come to India with a peace policy but his government was involved in an unbroken series of hostilities for the first five years of his administration. The earliest of these wars was with Nepal.

About the middle of the eighteenth century Prithwi Narayan Sah, a chief of Rajput descent, was ruler of Gurkha, a small hill State on the southern slopes of the Himalaya. In twenty years of incessant fighting he became master of the twenty-four States of Nepal; and by 1794 his successors had conquered the highlands between Bhutan and Kashmir and pushed their borders down to the marches of the company's territories in India. Nepal was essentially a military State, and the government of the country lay in the hands of its warrior statesmen. The army of Nepal was drilled and equipped on European lines and its men, then as now, were born fighters.

Nepalese officers had encroached upon the company's frontier in the time of Minto, and in 1814 two districts within the Bengal border were seized. Lord Hastings demanded their surrender. The government of Khatmandu made evasive replies and coupled them with further hostile acts. Finally the governor-general broke off negotiations with great reluctance and declared war upon Nepal.

In November 1814 three British columns entered the hills on the first of the frontier expeditions which have intermittently engaged

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. I. pp. 442, 443.

the Government of India ever since. The strategy as planned by Lord Hastings was sound enough. But four out of his five generals were incompetent and the campaign opened with a series of defeats in one of which General Gillespie was killed. General (Sir David) Ochterlony and Colonel Gardner were the only commanders able to grasp the first principles of mountain warfare. Gardner and Nicolls took Almora, the capital of Kumaon, at the end of April 1815. In May the Nepalese General Amar Singh, who had been driven into Malaon by Ochterlony, was forced to sign a convention surrendering the disputed districts in Bengal, and was allowed to march out from the fortress with the honours of war.

The government of Nepal refused at first to ratify the Convention but after further operations Ochterlony advanced upon the capital and peace was signed at Sagauli in March 1816.<sup>1</sup> Nepal ceded Garhwal and Kumaon with the greater part of the Tarai, evacuated Sikkim and a British Resident was appointed to Khatmandu.<sup>2</sup>

This treaty gave the European servants of the company their first Himalayan hill-stations, and Naini Tal in Kumaon is now the summer capital of the United Provinces. Nepal, an independent kingdom under the shadowy suzerainty of China, has remained a firm ally of Great Britain. Today Nepal supplies the 19,000 men of the Gurkha regiments in the Indian army and the Eastern Frontier Rifle battalions

During the war with Nepal Pindari outrages in the company's and the Nizam's territories increased to such an extent that Lord Hastings determined to suppress the freebooters once and for all. In 1816 they raided the Northern Circars and in less than a fortnight plundered 339 villages, killed nearly two hundred people and tortured or maltreated more than four

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 389-409. Prinsep's account, *Political and Military Transactions*, 1813-1823, Edn. 1825, Vol. I pp. 81-207, gives maps and sketches.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Hodgson, whose services in the cause of peace on the northern frontier were as great as his pioneer researches in Buddhist literature were distinguished, was promoted Resident in 1833. His biography has been written by Sir William Hunter.

thousand peaceful and inoffensive subjects of the Company. This ended the hesitation of the Board of Control under Canning to endorse active measures.<sup>1</sup>

The general situation was not improved by the fact that although the Maratha chiefs openly disowned the Pindaris they secretly encouraged them; and this was to lead, through complications with the Peshwa Baji Rao, to the final extinction of Maratha power in India. Lord Hastings fully realized that the steps he was taking might bring the Marathas into the field against him, and while he mobilized all his available forces he took every political precaution in his power. In the course of 1816 and 1817 treaties were made with about twenty Muhammadan and Hindu states. The most valuable alliance, which Sindia made an ineffectual demonstration to stop,<sup>2</sup> was with Wazir Muhammad Bhopal, whose successors, most of them princesses, have remained ever since the staunch friends of the British Government. Jaipur, which was threatened by Amir Khan in 1816, was offered an alliance which its ruler refused; and Appa Sahib Bhonsla, the Regent of Nagpur, signed in May 1816 a subsidiary treaty which he afterwards annulled. Amir Khan, after negotiating with the company and the Peshwa in turn finally came to terms with Lord Hastings,<sup>3</sup> disbanded his army and was given the Nawabship of Tonk, where his successors still rule.

These diplomatic moves to some extent eased the situation but the keys to the strongholds of the Maratha confederacy lay in the hands of Sindia at Gwalior and the Peshwa in Poona. Sindia's power of offensive was effectually neutralized when Lord Hastings in his preliminary movements against the Pindaris in 1817, marched with his main army to Gwalior and obliged Sindia to sign a treaty which Sir John Malcolm describes as contrary to his inclination but consonant to his interests. By its terms Sindia furnished a contingent for the Pindari campaign under British command, admitted British troops to garrison his country, and agreed to keep his main army

<sup>1</sup> Orders received by Lord Hastings at the end of March 1817. For the Despatch of the Board of Control see Malcolm's *History*, Vol. I. pp. 486-488.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 433-434.

within his own dominions. One of the clauses ran as follows: "If (which God forbid!) the British Government and the Maharajah shall be compelled to wage war with any other State, on account of such State attacking either of the contracting parties or aiding . . . the Pindaris . . . the British Government, having at heart the welfare of Dowlat Row Scindia, will, in the event of success, and of his highness's zealous performance of his engagements, make the most liberal arrangements for the consolidation and increase of his territories."<sup>1</sup>

The Peshwa had remained at peace with the British since the treaty of Bassein ten years earlier, and secure in their support he had steadily strengthened his resources. Baji Rao was bold in intrigue, cowardly in action and depraved in conduct. He was the only Peshwa who had full leisure to devote himself to improving the government, but his administration was notoriously corrupt and he refused to listen to the complaints of his subjects.<sup>2</sup> The Peshwa's attitude towards the company's government changed in tone, and became noticeably unfriendly, when Trimbakji Danglia became Baji Rao's confidential adviser in 1814. Trimbakji's only qualifications were his vices, and his sole exploit was a highly coloured version of his escape from the company's prison at Salsette when he was confined there for the singularly atrocious murder of Gangadhar Sastri, the Brahman envoy of the Gaekwar of Baroda in 1816.<sup>3</sup> In 1817 Lord Hastings decided to end the hostile intrigues and unfriendly acts of Baji Rao and Trimbakji either by a treaty which would impose strong British control over the Poona government, or by dethroning the Peshwa. Baji Rao saw his danger and signed the treaty of Poona in June 1817 by which he renounced his headship of the Maratha confederacy, which was dissolved, ceded the Konkan and certain forts to the company, recognized the independence of the Gaekwar of Baroda and amongst other clauses denounced Trimbakji as the murderer of Gangadhar

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 431-433.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Political History of India*, Vol. I. pp. 466-468. *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. pp. 429-431.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. pp. 440-442. Malcolm, *op. cit.* pp. 474-478.



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Sastri.<sup>1</sup> The Peshwa also transferred his regular battalions to the company as part of the subsidiary contingent which was called the Poona auxiliary force.<sup>2</sup>

In the autumn of 1817 Lord Hastings began operations against the Pindaris, a campaign which became merged in the third Maratha war. A total force of 113,000 men, including 13,000 Europeans with 300 guns, was mobilized, and divided into two armies, the Army of Hindustan under the governor-general and the Deccan Army under Sir Thomas Hislop with Sir John Malcolm as his chief staff and political officer. The strategic plan was to surround the Pindaris in Malwa within a circle 700 miles across and then by a systematic "drive" hunt them down and break up their forces. To prevent the Marathas from joining the freebooters a strong detachment was disposed as a cordon between Poona and Nagpur. The co-ordinated movements of the nine divisions of the "northern" and "southern" armies—the most extensive operations ever conducted in India—were entirely successful, although the troops suffered severely from cholera. By the end of January 1818 the Pindaris were annihilated.<sup>3</sup>

The Peshwa, with his new minister Bapu Gokhale, believing that the Pindari campaign offered him the certain opportunity of getting rid of British control, concentrated his army at Poona, and on 5th November 1817 rose in revolt.<sup>4</sup> He burnt the Residency and then attacked the British force 2800 strong under Colonel Burr at Kirkee, with 26,000 men. The Marathas were completely defeated, and Colonel Burr followed up his victory by winning two brilliantly successful actions against equally heavy odds at Koregaon and at Ashti where Bapu Gokhale was killed. Baji Rao, a fugitive after Kirkee, surrendered on 18th June 1818 to Sir John Malcolm, who with misplaced generosity

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. I. pp. 479-481.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 431, 455.

<sup>4</sup> The events at Poona during the critical days from the 19th October to the 5th November are vividly described by Grant Duff who was present with the political agent Mountstuart Elphinstone (*History of the Marhattas*, Vol. II. pp. 471-481).

pledged the company to grant the Peshwa the excessive annuity of eight lakhs of rupees. Baji Rao went into retirement at Bithur on the Ganges with his adopted son Dhundhu Pant, who was to become known in 1857 as Nana Sahib.

Two of the Maratha chiefs, Appa Sahib, who had succeeded to the throne of Berar, and Holkar, followed the Peshwa's example and began hostilities against the British.

Appa Sahib attacked the small composite force of Indian troops at Nagpur at the end of November 1818, and was severely defeated in the action of Sitabaldi. All was over in less than three weeks. Appa Sahib took refuge with the Sikhs, and the Saugor and Narbada districts of Berar State were annexed by the company.<sup>1</sup>

The dispositions made by Lord Hastings had effectually prevented united action by the Maratha states, and the campaign begun by Holkar in December (1818) ended in his immediate and total defeat by General Sir Thomas Hislop at Mahidpur. On 6th January 1819 Holkar came to terms, by which he gave up his possessions south of the Narbada, abandoned his claims upon the Rajput chiefs, and agreed to receive a British Resident and to maintain a subsidiary force.<sup>2</sup>

Asirgharh, one of the forts which Sindia had agreed to hand over temporarily, had not been surrendered, and its commandant who had been directly encouraged by Sindia openly helped Appa Sahib.<sup>3</sup> Lord Hastings accordingly decided to take the place; and the siege which began in February 1819 ended in its capture on the 9th April. The fall of Asirgharh ended the war; and Sindia's undoubted treachery was forgiven.

The Maratha confederacy was broken. The Peshwa had disappeared and the descendants of Sivaji were allowed to rule in semi-independence at Satara until 1848 when the British Government, which at that time did not recognize the Hindu law of adoption of heirs, escheated Satara on the ground of lapse and annexed it. Sindia, Holkar and the Bhonsla raja of Berar were definitely bound over to keep the peace of India, and the Maratha States were enclosed

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II. pp. 493-498.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 501-506.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 454

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within carefully demarcated limits.<sup>1</sup> The existence of the Rajput States, princes of whose race had ruled in India for over thirteen hundred years, was assured.

The year 1819 marks the great political settlement of Central India under British supremacy. It then became recognized that, outside the Punjab and Sind, the foreign relations of every State in the country should be under the control of the British Government of India; that all interstate disputes should be settled by British arbitration; that the British Government would intervene to quell disorder or to remedy gross misgovernment; that the subsidiary forces and state contingents should be under British supervision; and that British Residents should be appointed to the more important States to exercise these functions. British ascendancy was absolute.

The policy of Lord Hastings may be summed up as a middle course. It lay between the dream of Cornwallis that the stronger organizations would absorb the petty States and become good neighbours of the British—and the views of Lord Dalhousie, that the good of the people required annexations.

The political achievement of Lord Hastings, the result of his brilliantly successful campaigns, was his outstanding *Singapore*. work in India, but this was not his only contribution to the building up of British imperial power. The Dutch settlements in Java, taken in the time of Lord Minto, had been unconditionally restored in 1814, and the Dutch at once attempted to exclude all foreign competition in the Archipelago. On the advice of Sir Stamford Raffles, governor of the small British colony in Sumatra, Lord Hastings sanctioned the occupation of the island of Singapore in the Straits of Malacca then inhabited only by a few fishermen. The British flag was hoisted in 1819; and in 1824 an adjustment of territory was made with Holland, which ended all friction with that government.

<sup>1</sup> Prinsep, *Political and Military Transactions in India*, Vol. II. pp. 381-405.

Between 1819 and the end of his term of office Lord Hastings sent several expeditions against the pirates of the Persian Gulf and finally stamped out piracy on the Indian coast from the Konkan to Cutch.

*End of Piracy.* Order in the company's territories was unfortunately disturbed by two popular outbreaks. The insurrection at Bareilly in 1816 was caused by the injudicious methods of an Indian subordinate, when a new and unpopular police tax was imposed. The tax was denounced as a public grievance and an influential mufti incited the Muhammadans to join in a religious riot. By the middle of April the insurrection became serious. Troops had to be called out but the disturbances were not suppressed until twenty-one Indian soldiers and more than three hundred of the insurgents had lost their lives. British rule in Orissa had unquestionably created a feeling of discontent, as the subsequent official inquiry brought out. The upper classes disliked an administration which, as an Indian of high rank told Strachey,<sup>1</sup> "reduces me to a level with my domestics and labourers." The British courts of justice which were considered a grievance by the upper classes were not looked upon as a blessing by the lower, on account of the expenses and delay of litigation.

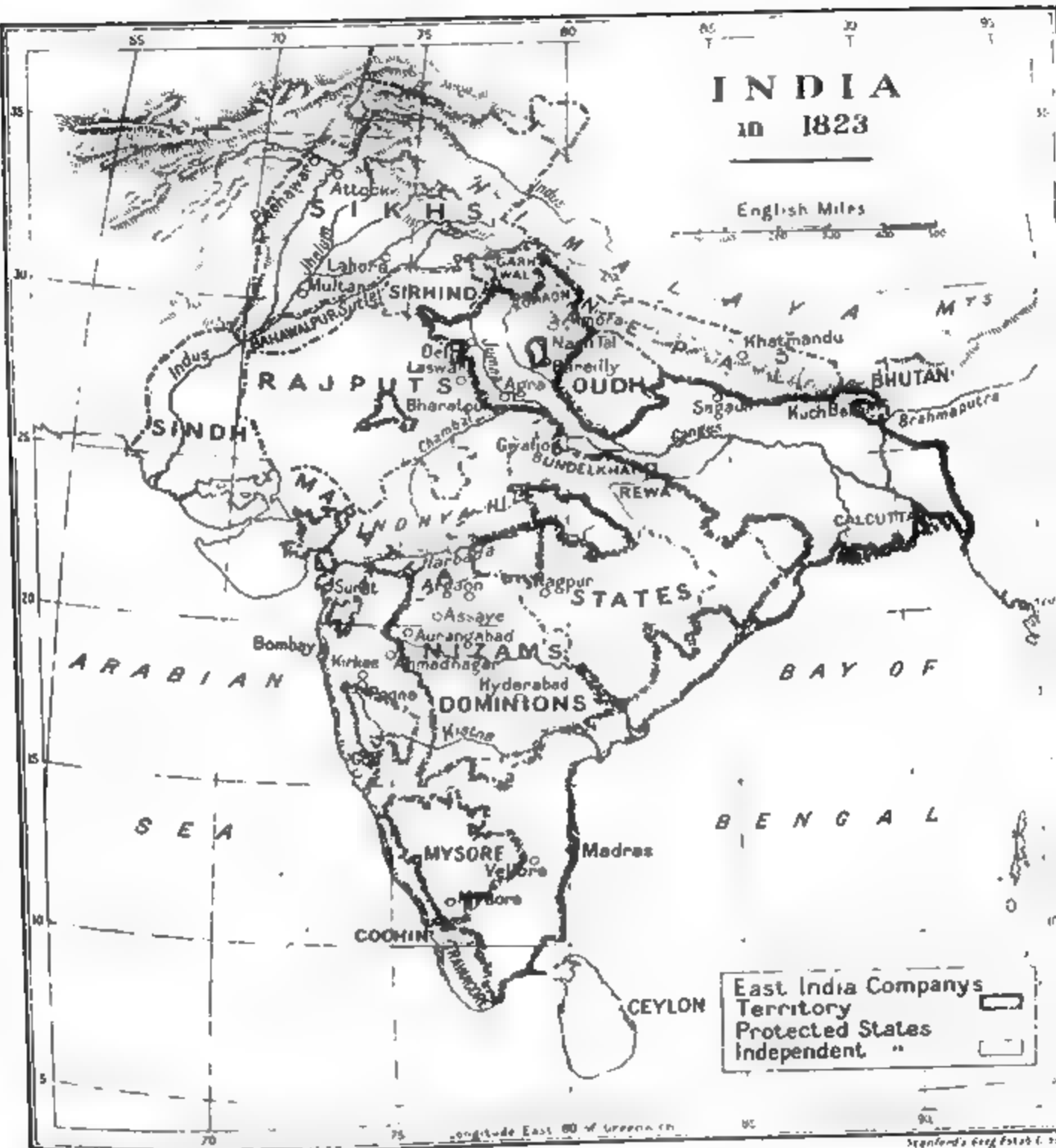
The disturbances at Cuttack in Orissa which took place about the same time were due to over-assessment, the raising of the salt tax and the dishonesty of subordinate Indian officials. The riots were quelled and the undoubted grievances were removed by a sympathetic and understanding commissioner.

*Internal Disturbances.* Lord Hastings, while extending British authority in India, did not neglect the administration of the company's territories, and he paid strict attention to finance. His military operations entailed serious deficits in the budgets between 1818 and 1821,<sup>2</sup> but a surplus was obtained in his last two years without extra taxation, and he gained the confidence of the Indian princes, who began to invest their money in government securities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> Prinsep, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. Statement facing p. 443.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Hastings*, Sir Lepel Griffin, p. 208.





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Agriculture was helped by the reopening of the Haryana and Doab canals, which had silted up, and by the extensive construction and repair of roads. Other public works included the restoration of the old Mogul water-supply of Delhi and the town-planning which gave Calcutta better sanitary conditions, a more beautiful city and a handsome embankment on the river front.

The Governor-General's sympathy for the Anglo-Indian<sup>1</sup> community took the practical form of encouraging its members to enter the government service, where their promotion for good work was assured. From the day when Lord Hastings promoted Skinner, descendant of the Scotsman Hercules Skinner and the Rajput girl he married, from captain of Irregulars to lieutenant-colonel, Anglo-Indians have served the government of India loyally and well.

During the administration of Lord Hastings, Sir Thomas Munro, who became Governor of Madras in 1820, made a new land survey and assessment in that Presidency. The general system was *ryotwari*, and the holdings ranged from about four acres to over four thousand. Munro rightly kept to that system, but the assessments made were too high, and although the governor did all in his power to modify the local harshness of collection, the assessments were not reduced to a fair level for many years.

Newspapers in the form of court-gazettes were, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, common in the Indian States. These gave news, as matters of fact, without comment,<sup>2</sup> and Grant Duff makes an amusing reference to the power of publicity under the Peshwa's government. Lord Hastings interested himself in Indian education, founding schools at his own expense; and it was during his term of office that a Bengali news-

<sup>1</sup> "A resident British subject (not being pure European) who is of European descent in the male line, or who is of mixed Asiatic and non-Asiatic descent, and whose father, grandfather, or more remote ancestor was born in the continent of Europe, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa or the U.S.A." (*Ind. Stat. Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 43). The term Anglo-Indian was used by Sir John Malcolm in 1826 (*Political History*, Vol. II. pp. 260-265).

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. II. p. 310.

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paper first appeared in British India. This was followed by the *Samachar-Darpan*, a periodical edited by the Serampur missionaries; and an Indian-owned press soon developed. For a number of years the Indian press devoted its attention to religious topics, it was not influential in the political sense, and its circulation was not large. Sir Thomas Munro had pointed out that an unrestricted press and an autocratic government were incompatible and that the first duty of a free press was "to deliver the country from a foreign yoke." But although the Indian press grew up under virtually no restrictions, it was not until 1853 that a definitely political paper, the *Hindu Patriot*, appeared. Strong attacks upon the government by Indian newspapers then began, and a censorship was imposed.<sup>1</sup>

It must, however, be said that from about 1790 there had been "in different parts of India a most active circulation of inflammatory papers in the form of proclamations, letters and prophecies, directed to the subversion of the British power . . . in almost all cases . . . addressed to the interests and passions of (its) native troops."<sup>2</sup>

Very different from the earliest Indian publications in British India were the beginnings of the English press in the country. The first English periodical was the *Bengal Gazette*, brought out by Hickey in January 1780, when "the times were favourable for the profit and popularity of an editor prepared to promulgate the acts, the misrepresentations, the calumnies, the public and private scandal, which disgraced the period at which his labours commenced."<sup>3</sup> Hickey spent a large proportion of his time in jail and his paper was suppressed early in 1782. Other enterprising and sometimes seditious journals followed. Lord Wellesley was obliged to take strong measures when the publication of shipping news gave invaluable information to the French privateers; and Lord Minto drew up a revised code of censorship regulations in 1813.

Lord Hastings was prepared to grant a definitely restricted freedom to the press. He substituted a series of regulations for the

<sup>1</sup> See *Political India*, ed. Sir John Cumming, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 317, footnote.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 292.



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censorship in 1817, but he forbade criticism of the authorities in India or England, discussion of Indian religious beliefs, and "personal remarks tending to excite dissension in society."<sup>1</sup> This, however, did not deter James Silk Buckingham, the brilliant editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, from launching a widely circulated press campaign against the Governor-General, with which his successor, Mr. Adam, subsequently dealt.

It is, unfortunately, impossible to avoid reference to a deplorable indiscretion which marked the close of Lord Hastings' time in India. This was the Governor-General's regrettable connexion with a firm of bankers whose business dealings with the State of Hyderabad closely resembled the financial operations of Paul Benfield in the Carnatic. A partner of the firm in question, Palmer & Company, had married a connexion of Lord Hastings, who was also his ward. The governor-general without proper inquiry granted government sanction to Palmer's application to transact what was in point of fact illegal and dishonest business in Hyderabad. Palmer & Company, with their fees, and charges for interest at an enormous rate, piled up a colossal balance in their own favour, and then applied to the Government of India to recover this sum for them from the Hyderabad treasury. Lord Hastings, who had no financial interest whatever in the transaction, blindly defended Palmer & Company, and this drew down upon him so strong a censure from the directors that he sent in his resignation in 1821. In the words of Thornton,<sup>2</sup> "the Marquis of Hastings, in this unhappy affair, sacrificed his reputation, which he valued beyond all things, to the passion of others for amassing wealth—a passion in which he did not participate, and by the indulgence of which he was to gain nothing."

Lord Hastings retired on the 9th January 1823. His only known qualification for the appointment of governor-general had been a close friendship with the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV. But Prinsep,<sup>3</sup> writing in 1825, could sum up the results of his adminis-

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, Vol. II pp. 300-301, footnote

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 456.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol II p. 421.

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tration in these words: "The struggle which ended in the universal establishment of the British influence is particularly important. . . . Henceforth this epoch will be referred to as that whence each of the existing States will date the commencement of its peaceable settlement and the consolidation of its relations with the controlling power. The dark age of trouble and violence which so long spread its malign influence over the fertile regions of Central India has thus ceased from this time; and a new era has commenced, we trust with brighter prospects—an era of peace, prosperity and wealth at least, if not political liberty and high moral improvement." The history of India in the nineteenth century and after records the issue of these prospects.

The effect upon India of contact with the West, which first became widespread and insistent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, made its earliest appearance in an attempt at religious reforms. This was to be expected in a country where religion counts more than anything else in everyday life, and where the introduction of Islam had led to the Bhakti movement.

In 1828 the Brahmo Samaj was started, and the ideals of its founder, the Brahman Ram Mohun Roy, may be realized from the titles of his works, *An Abstract of the Sutras* and *The Precepts of Jesus Christ: a Guide to Peace and Happiness*. The Brahmo Samaj, developed by Keshab Chandra Sen, with its encouragement of inter-caste marriage, is today a spent force. Reaction came with the Arya Samaj founded by Dyananda Sarasvati, a Hindu villager whose teaching of the Brahmanic tradition is still a vital movement, especially in the north. Outstanding among these religious revivals is the Ramakrishna movement, as it was named by that Indian saint's follower Vivekananda, the founder of the Order. The movement, which began about the middle of the last century, has been described<sup>1</sup> as the most characteristic expression of Indian nationalism. Centred on the Brahma Sutras, the rock upon which Indian culture is built, it insisted upon selfless service for the masses of the people, with the

<sup>1</sup> *The British Connection with India*, K. T. Paul (London), 1927, which gives the Indian social and philanthropic point of view of the various phases of the Indian national movement.

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object of forming a perfect human fellowship. The religious movement soon developed into social reform.

Western ideas were brought in with the English educational system introduced by Lord William Bentinck in 1835; and the writings of Paine and the speeches of the philosophic radicals were read by educated high-caste Indians. Political activity on democratic lines followed the impulse towards social reform. But among the first generation of English-educated Indians and indeed until more recent times when female education began to make some headway, English ideas had no influence among the masses of India. The preponderating influence of Hindu mothers was all against changes affecting family life; the agricultural classes had no use for education; and the Muhammadans stood aloof. Consequently there was brought into existence a small urban class drawn exclusively from men of the higher castes, whose aim was the political liberty to which Prinsep referred in rather dubious terms.

Indian political evolution and the administrative reforms of modern times will be described later, but an indication may be given here of the tendencies of the Indian reformers. Even the earliest had marked political leanings. Ram Mohun Roy, whose interest in the English Reform Bill and in the Indian Charter Act of 1833 took him to England, organized a public protest in 1823 in favour of liberty of the press. A hundred years later Mahatma Gandhi, a student at the bar for four years in London, champion of the "Suppressed" classes, as he has called them, and the leader of the *satyagraha*<sup>1</sup> movement appealed to the sermon on the mount as the supreme criterion of private and public conduct.

The era of peace to which Prinsep confidently looked forward in his political review of Lord Hastings' administration was not yet to dawn over India. The government of the company had still to meet not only the terrible storms of 1857, but the last and most serious challenge made by an Indian power. The Marathas had been weakened by the expansion of their nominal rule beyond their control, and were dealt with in detail. But the Sikhs were concentrated

<sup>1</sup> "Non-violent non-co-operation."

within limits which they could fill with their zeal, and were to prove most formidable adversaries.

In 1809 the north-west frontier of British India and the protected States had been advanced by the treaty with the *Ranjit Singh.* southern (Malwa) Sikhs to the left bank of the Sutlej. Beyond that river Ranjit Singh had built up a formidable military State by ruthlessly mastering the rival independent confederacies which when disunited were helpless against an enemy.

Born in 1780, Ranjit Singh was the son of Sirdar Mahan Singh, the enterprising and unscrupulous leader of the Sucharchakia confederacy, and was of Rajput descent. Mahan Singh died fighting in 1792, and Ranjit Singh owed to his wife's mother Sada Kour, a woman of remarkable ability and head of the Karheya confederacy, the early opportunities which led to his later ascendancy.

In Ranjit Singh, who was a born leader of men, unfailing political foresight and indomitable perseverance were combined with the greatest courage and endurance. He was an excellent rider, his love of horses amounting to a passion, he was a keen sportsman and a fine swordsman. Like many other great Indian soldiers and statesmen he was simple in his dress and wore either saffron-coloured Kashmir cloth or plain white muslin without jewels or ornament, except on state occasions. Baron Charles Hügel,<sup>1</sup> saw the Lion of the Punjab when drunkenness and debauchery had prematurely aged him and he was disfigured by smallpox and crippled from a paralytic seizure. He described him as the most ugly and unprepossessing man he saw in the Punjab—except when mounted. The Maharaja was blind of one eye, and a short man with a massive forehead whose head seemed too large for his body. But feeble blind and paralysed though he became, Ranjit Singh kept his absolute ascendancy over his court of fierce and turbulent chiefs, and until the last day of his life was always instantly obeyed.

Ranjit Singh steadily increased his dominions whenever opportunity offered; and his army was equal to his ambitions. Very early in his career he realized that the existing Sikh system was unsound. He visited Lord Lake's

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab, 1845.*

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army in 1805,<sup>1</sup> saw the organization and training which had conquered the military races of India, and remodelled the Khalsa army on similar lines. The Sikh horsemen had always been the fighting arm, but Ranjit Singh made his infantry the principal branch of the service, to which he sent the pick of his recruits. In 1812 Ochterlony saw two regiments of Sikhs and several battalions of Hindus drilled by British deserters,<sup>2</sup> and the Maharaja engaged European generals such as Ventura and Allard who had distinguished themselves under Napoleon, and an Irishman, Gardner, who was an able artillery officer, to train his troops. The highest commands in the field were reserved for Indian generals, of whom the best was Hari Singh, who eventually took command on the Peshawar frontier.

The old chiefs disliked the military reforms, but Ranjit Singh gave his regular troops good pay, wore the new uniform and was accustomed to drill his regiments himself. The men of the regular army wore a scarlet uniform, in imitation of the British and had similar equipment. The feudal levies were mounted, and wore what they pleased. Many of them were country gentlemen of means who paraded in coats of mail, or many coloured silks and velvets, with their swords, their matchlocks and the small round Sikh shields of buffalo hide, and even bows and arrows.

The Sikh administration has been described by Sir Lepel Griffin<sup>3</sup> as the process of squeezing out of the unhappy peasant, Hindu or Muhammadan, every rupee that he could be made to disgorge. The Sikhs, it may be said, were soldiers almost to a man. The revenue officer, who was also the district judge, dared not fall into arrears of payment. His one administrative problem was to maintain cultivation at the highest possible level and at the same time keep the cultivators at the lowest point of depression. Custom-houses covered the country and duties were levied on almost every article of common use, without any discrimination between luxuries and the necessities of life.

The only comment to be made on law and order is that the highways were universally unsafe. But the administration was far

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp 172 173

<sup>3</sup> *Ranjit Singh*, Sir Lepel Griffin, Ch VII., "Army and Administration."

better than it had been in the days of the confederacies, when government had been nothing more than an organized system of massacre and pillage. The centre and south of the kingdom were firmly and not unjustly ruled, but justice on the north-west frontier, when the Italian general Avitabile governed Peshawar, was symbolized by his portable gallows.

In 1809 Ranjit Singh took Kangra and contained the Gurkhas in the hills to the left bank of the Sutlej. It is unnecessary to detail the affairs of the two ex-kings of Kabul, Shah Shujah and Zaman Shah and their dealings with the Maharaja, beyond saying that when Shah Shujah was in Lahore in 1813, Ranjit Singh obliged him to give up the Koh-i-nur diamond. This gem was surrendered, on the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849, in token of submission to Queen Victoria. In 1813 Ranjit Singh took Attock, and then turned his forces northwards to fail in his first invasion of Kashmir. In 1815 he began his systematic advance towards what he was to make the existing north-west frontier of India. Multan was taken in 1818, and Ranjit Singh temporarily occupied Peshawar in the same year. The Afghan garrison of Kashmir was overpowered in 1819, and the country annexed, to be followed by the capture of the Derajat of the Indus plain in 1820.

Ranjit Singh now prepared to carry his frontier from the Indus to the north-western passes. Muhammad Azim Khan who had been the Afghan governor of Kashmir and had recently proclaimed Shah Ayub king of Kabul was now master of Afghanistan in all but name, and governor of Peshawar. On 13th March 1823 Ranjit Singh crossed the Indus. A religious war had been preached amongst the Khattaks and Usufzais and twenty thousand tribesmen were with the Afghan army which met the Sikhs at Nowshera on the following day. A stubbornly contested action ended in the defeat of Muhammad Azim. Ranjit Singh marched upon Peshawar and sacked it. After plundering the country up to the Khyber Pass, he retired beyond the Indus, leaving Yar Muhammad (Muhammad Azim's brother), who had tendered his submission, to govern Peshawar in the name of the Khalsa.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs, passim.*

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Ranjit Singh had now brought under his sway the three Muhamadan provinces of Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar, and he was supreme in the hills and plains of the Punjab itself. Partly by intrigue, but mainly by force of arms, he had created a kingdom which was held together by a strong tie of religion which was wanting in the Pindari hordes and which in the case of the Maratha confederacy was weakened by caste.

No better field than the Punjab could have been selected for the policy of non-intervention by the British Government. The experiment of a strong organization was tried, under every condition of success, in a tract of country where the company's frontier was defined by a river, and at a time when the house of Delhi and the Marathas were reduced to impotence, while Afghanistan was occupied with its own affairs.<sup>1</sup> But the policy of non-intervention and of avoiding political settlements was to break down in the north, as it had failed in the centre of India. Ten years after the death of the great Maharaja in 1839, the second Sikh war ended in the British annexation of the Punjab.

<sup>1</sup> *The Native States of India*, Sir W. Lee-Warner, and Edn., pp. 98, 99.

### NOTE 1.—THE HYDERABAD CONTINGENT

After the disbandment of Raymond's Corps and the replacement of English for French influence in Hyderabad, the Nizam put a Subsidiary Force at the disposal of the company; and about 6000 cavalry and 3600 infantry co-operated in the campaign which destroyed Tipu Sultan. This force, whose roll of officers included Spaniards, Portuguese, an East Indian of Dutch extraction, as well as Englishmen, Scotsmen and Irish was "incomplete in numbers, loose in discipline, irregularly paid, badly armed, badly dressed, and subject to (innumerable) frauds and stoppages." It is hardly surprising that mutinies occurred in 1812. In the following year the force was reformed. The famous Russell Brigade was created, and what was eventually called the Hyderabad Contingent, came into being, with two infantry battalions and small units of heavy field guns. In 1816 the cavalry were reorganized. General Arthur Wellesley had said in 1803: "The Nizam's Horse are very useless, which annoys me a good deal". Lord Gough was to state before the Committee of the House of Commons fifty years later that they were the finest irregular cavalry in the world, a reputation which they afterwards maintained. The strength of the Contingent varied. For some time it consisted of 100 European officers with 60 warrant officers and N.C.O.s, and about 5800

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Indian cavalry and 8800 infantry. When the Contingent became part of the Indian Army in 1903 it totalled 126 British officers and 2000 cavalry, 5400 infantry and artillery in Indian ranks and 16 guns. Its almost continuous war service began with the Maratha War in 1817. The Contingent greatly helped in the pacification of the country during the next forty years, it played a prominent part in the Central India operations of 1857-58, and its last engagements as a separate force were in the Third Burma War of 1885 and the subsequent suppression of the dacoits. The *History of the Hyderabad Contingent*, by Major (Colonel) R. G. Burton, from which these facts have been taken, was published by the Government Printing Press (Calcutta) in 1905.

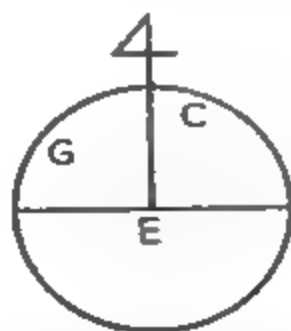
### NOTE 2.—INDIAN STANDARDS

The *Ain-i-Akhbari* gives, as the Mogul standards, the traditional Indian emblems of royalty, the umbrella, the hand, and various sun standards. By 1800 these were probably purely emblematic of court rank. The six standards presented to Lord Lake by Shah Alam (after the defeat of Sindia and Perron's battalions) which are now in the India Museum at South Kensington, were the "fish" and the usual flat, gilded emblems the "hand" (*aim*) and the sun standards (*kokba* and *shaban*).

The Marathas had two flags, Sivaji's personal yellow ascetic robe banner and the Jari Patka, or Golden Pennon, carried before the Bhonsla rajas of Berar. See *History of the Marathas*, Vol. I pp. 283, 297 and note; and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XIV. p. 343.

### NOTE 3.—THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S COLOURS

It is symbolic of the development of the company that the early device on the Colours of its troops was the trade mark, stamped upon the bales of its goods. This trade mark (and its variants), which were used as early as 1658 (*vide* India Office MSS. Letter Book, Vol. II p. 69, dated 14th March 1658), was called by the Indian word *nishan*; and the trade "nishan" became, between 1805 and 1813, the soldier's *nishan*, the name by which the colours are known in the Indian Army today.



In the Madras Army of 1759 the Company flags were of almost every colour, usually with a red or white cross in the centre. In 1781, under the battalion system, there were two colours, the Union Jack, and the regimental colour which bore



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the union in the upper canton and a wreathed numeral in the centre. In 1797 the Bengal Cavalry, and in 1800 the Governor-General's bodyguard, received standards. Descriptions of colours and standards of the company's army are given in the authoritative works by Major H Bullock, *Indian Cavalry Standards* (London), 1930, and *Indian Infantry Colours* (Bombay), 1931, upon which this note is based.

## CHRONOLOGY TO CHAPTERS XV, XVI

- 1772. Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal.  
E.I.C. Directors appealed to Lord North for financial help.
- 1773. Regulating Act passed.
- 1774. Warren Hastings first Governor-General.  
Rohilla War.
- 1775. Benares and Ghazipur ceded to the company.  
Bombay government occupied Salsette and Bassein.
- 1776. Maratha War.
- 1778. France declared war (American War of Independence).  
English took French settlements in India.
- 1779. Triple Alliance of Mysore, Hyderabad and the Marathas against  
the English.
- 1780. Birth of Ranjit Singh.
- 1781. Defeat of Haider Ali at Porto Novo.  
Peace with the Marathas.  
Amending Act passed by Parliament
- 1782. Death of Haider Ali.  
Naval actions between Suffren and Hughes.
- 1783. French settlements restored by Treaty of Versailles.  
Treaty of Salbai with the Marathas.
- 1784. Treaty with Tipu Sultan of Mysore; general peace in India.  
Pitt's India Act, establishing Board of Control passed.
- 1785. Warren Hastings left India.  
Sindia occupied Delhi.
- 1786-1793. Lord Cornwallis Governor-General.
- 1789. Tipu attacked Travancore.
- 1790. Third Mysore War.
- 1792. Tipu made peace.
- 1793. War with France.  
Capture of Pondicherry.  
Permanent Settlement of Bengal.  
Act renewing Company's Charter.  
Death of Taimur Shah.
- 1794. Death of Mahadaji Sindia, succeeded by Daulat Rao.
- 1795. Defeat of the Nizam by the Marathas.

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- 1796. Ceylon taken from the Dutch.
- 1797. Shah Zaman invaded the Punjab.
- 1798. Earl of Mornington (Marquis Wellesley) Governor-General.  
French Expedition to Egypt.
- 1799. Capture of Seringapatam and death of Tipu Sultan.  
Partition of Mysore.
- 1800. Subsidiary Treaty with Hyderabad.
- 1801. Annexation of the Carnatic.  
Oudh ceded frontier territory by Subsidiary Treaty.
- 1802. Treaty of Bassein and restoration of Peshwa.  
Peace of Amiens.
- 1803. War renewed with France  
League of Sindia and Raghuji Bhonsla.  
Treaties of Deogaon and Surji Arjungaon.
- 1804. Gackwar of Baroda signed Subsidiary Treaty.  
War with Holkar.  
Colonel Monson's disaster.
- 1805. Marquess Cornwallis superseded Marquess Wellesley, and died.  
Sir George Barlow Governor-General.
- 1807. Lord Minto Governor-General.  
Travancore War
- 1809. Treaty signed with Ranjit Singh at Amritsar.  
Mauritius captured from the French.
- 1813. East India Company lost trade monopoly by Charter Act.
- 1813-1823. Marquess of Hastings Governor-General.
- 1814-1816. War with Nepal: Kumaon ceded to the Company.
- 1817. Pindaris exterminated.  
Third and last Maratha War.
- 1818. Deposition of the Peshwa.
- 1823. Ranjit Singh master of the provinces of Multan, Kashmir and  
Peshawar.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### British Supremacy

WHEN Lord Hastings left India in January 1823, John Adam, a member of council, acted as governor-general for several months. In deporting Buckingham, editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, for his criticisms of the authorities, Adam showed great moral courage, as Buckingham had the support of the British non-official community in his campaign for the freedom of the Press.<sup>1</sup> Buckingham appealed to the Privy Council against Adam's decision, and lost his case.

The new governor-general Lord Amherst came to Calcutta in August 1823 to find the company involved in difficulties with Burma which made war inevitable.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the State of Ava had overcome its rival Pegu and created the kingdom of Burma.<sup>2</sup> The kings of the Alaungpaya dynasty were strong and aggressive, and they steadily added to their dominions. The Irrawaddy delta and Tenasserim were taken in 1757, Arakan in 1785 and Manipur in 1813; while between 1765 and 1769 a succession of invading Chinese armies had been completely defeated. In 1816 Burmese troops entered Upper Assam, and between 1819 and 1824 they took possession of the country. It was not a difficult undertaking. The Ahom government had broken into four pieces and civil war between

<sup>1</sup> See Malcolm's *Political History*, Vol. II Appendix VI. for his examination of the advisability of "transplanting English freedom of the Press" into India at that time

<sup>2</sup> For the history of Burma to the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century see *Burma from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, Sir J. G. Scott (London), 1924

the rival factions was spreading chaos and misery through the Brahmaputra Valley.

The English connexion with Burma dated from the middle of the seventeenth century when private merchants, abandoning an earlier factory, established themselves at Rangoon to develop the trade in teak and lac. The Burmese were none too friendly, and the efforts of the East India Company to reach an official understanding were consistently ignored by the Burmese government. But when Arakan and Upper Assam were annexed the British and the Burmese became neighbours at two points, as the company had taken over Lower Assam in 1765, with the "Diwani" province of Bengal. This contact created a series of frontier incidents in which the Burmese were the aggressors,<sup>1</sup> and in the negotiations which followed the King of Burma took a very high hand. Self-centred, isolated, and with an unbroken record of conquest, he believed his country to be invincible; and exaggerated estimates of the power of the unknown kingdom were current in Calcutta.

The frontier incidents were succeeded by an act which could only mean war when, in 1823, the Burmese seized the small British island of Shahpuri on the Arakan coast, with a force whose orders were to take Calcutta. At the same time Burmese troops in the north under the pretext of a disputed succession in Cachar invaded that State, and one of the claimants appealed to the British. The occupation of Cachar by the Burmese would have laid Lower Assam open to invasion, and the company's government, declaring Cachar a protectorate, moved troops to the Sylhet-Cachar frontier. Jungle fighting, with its incidents of attacks upon stockades, followed in January 1824. War was not, however, formally declared until the 5th of March.

The main operations were based upon Rangoon, which was occupied in May by General Archibald Campbell with a force of 4000 British troops, 7000 Indian infantry of the Madras army and a flotilla of small river gunboats. The escort of cruisers was commanded by Captain Marryat, R.N., the novelist, and one of the

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 457-459.

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vessels was the *Dianna*, the first steamer used in war in the East,<sup>1</sup> which had been built at Calcutta docks and launched in 1823.<sup>2</sup>

The Burmese army of 70,000 men with a number of cannon was mainly a mass levy, and only half the force had muskets. They fought bravely enough and, until he was killed in action, had a capable leader in Bandula. But Campbell's most serious foe was the climate, assisted by the scandalous failure of the medical, supply and transport services. Malaria, dysentery and scurvy accounted for 96 per cent. of the fatal casualties; and including all reinforcements, out of 40,000 men eventually employed, 15,000 died in hospital.<sup>3</sup> A young officer in the company's service who was invalided on account of wounds was the future founder and raja of the State of Sarawak, James Brooke.

In the north the Burmese were driven out of Cachar and Manipur by June 1825. But the main column, with the auxiliary services hopelessly inefficient and its intelligence branch equally inadequate, could hardly move from its base for the first six months, and suffered severely from sickness during the rains. Campbell's first success was the defeat of the Burmese attack on Rangoon in December 1824; and this was followed, in the autumn of 1825, by an advance up the Irrawaddy.

On 24th February 1826 Campbell dictated the peace of Yandabo, four days' march from Ava. By this treaty King Bagyidaw ceded Arakan, Tenasserim, Upper Assam, Cachar, Jaintia and Manipur to the British, paid an indemnity equivalent to £1,000,000 towards the five million which the war had cost, received a Resident at Ava, and agreed to send his own representative to Calcutta. This last condition was never carried out, and with the British Resident withdrawn from Ava in 1840, friction with the Burmese government again led to war in 1852.

The Burmese war was not popular in England, for fear of the consequences of this further expansion which brought Avan and

<sup>1</sup> Thornton in his account of the operations, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-475.

<sup>2</sup> *The Making of India*, A. Yusuf Ali, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 560.

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Burmese politics within the field of the company's control. The home Government, however, signified their approval to the extent of giving Amherst an earldom.

A mutiny, which reasonable management should have avoided, occurred at Barrackpur at the end of October 1824. *Barrackpur Mutiny.* The war in Burma which was popular in the Madras army was unpopular in Bengal, and the 47th Native Infantry, when they were mobilized for field service had other grievances to add to their prejudices against serving overseas. Increased field allowances had been disallowed them while it was granted to the regimental followers, government transport was not provided, and the issue of new knapsacks for which the men had paid was not forthcoming. The 47th Native Infantry mutinied, and the outbreak had to be put down by a column of British troops of all arms and the governor-general's bodyguard promptly sent out from Calcutta.<sup>1</sup>

The earlier operations in Burma when the failure of the Rangoon expeditionary force was giving the government considerable anxiety, caused a certain amount of unrest in Central India, and trouble occurred at Bharatpur. Raja Baldeo Singh died in 1825 and his infant son was recognized by Sir David Ochterlony, the political agent at Delhi. Durjan Sal, the late raja's brother, who had failed to obtain British recognition of his own claim to the throne when Baldeo Singh succeeded, at once seized the fortress of Bharatpur and assumed what he maintained to be the regency. Ochterlony with equal decision, and on his own responsibility, called up troops and issued a proclamation calling upon the people to defend their rightful ruler. Lord Amherst countermanded these measures, and Ochterlony resigned, dying shortly afterwards. He was succeeded as political agent by Sir Charles Metcalfe.

Bharatpur now became the scene of civil war, and Maratha and other adventurers flocked to the country. The disturbances threatened to spread and the governor-general, who had not

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op cit.*, pp 447-448. Malcolm reviews contemporary Indian Army conditions in his *History*, Vol. II. pp. 232-236.

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originally considered interference in the internal affairs of the State to be justified, now reviewed the situation. He decided that military action would have to be taken and Durjan Sal removed. A strong force with siege guns under Lord Combermere, the commander-in-chief, invested the fortress of Bharatpur, and after a siege of just over five weeks the place, which had defied Lake in 1805, was taken by assault on the 18th January 1826. Durjan Sal was deported and the fortress dismantled.<sup>1</sup>

Great political changes had taken place in India since the days of the supremacy of the Mogul Empire. The *Paramountcy*. Imperial authority had been removed from Delhi. The sovereignty of the Peshwas had disappeared. The ascendancy of the company had grown by successive stages when "Clive carved out the Province of Bengal by conquest, Lord Wellesley added Madras and the North-Western Provinces partly by treaty and partly by force, and Lord Hastings created the Presidency of Bombay."

Until the end of the eighteenth century the British authorities treated Indian princes, when making alliances with them, on terms of equality, as in the triple alliance against Tipu in 1790. Then by degrees the company advanced to an assertion of superiority in the treaties which were made, and their Indian allies were now required to surrender their rights of negotiation with foreign powers and with the States in alliance with the company. At this first stage, however, the government at Fort William disclaimed interference with the internal sovereignty of the States.<sup>2</sup> The system of subsidiary forces, a feature of Wellesley's policy, marked not only the pressure of common defence but the contrast between a policy of non-intervention and a policy of union. But changing political, social and economic conditions obliged what had become the paramount Power to exercise these functions of paramountcy beyond the terms of the early treaties.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-485.

<sup>2</sup> *The Native States of India*, Edn. 1910, p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Indian States Committee* (Butler Report), 1929, p. 14.



The growth of British paramount Power during the period under review is illustrated by the relations between the company and Hyderabad. In 1798 the treaty previously made with the Nizam was reaffirmed and the subsidiary force was increased and made permanent. In 1800 a further treaty was made which stated that: "The Honourable Company's Government on their part declare that they have no manner of concern with any of His Highness' children, relations, subjects or servants with respect to whom His Highness is absolute." In 1803 Sikandar Jah obtained the Emperor's confirmation to his accession; and Wellesley at once informed the new Nizam that the British Government considered all treaties made by the late Nizam with the company remained in full force. In the words of Lee-Warner<sup>1</sup>: "In the first period of British intercourse the prevalent idea in India was that successions needed the confirmation of higher authority; and Lord Wellesley accentuated the principle by delivering a formal instrument to the ruler of the leading State in the country": a principle which had certainly been recognized by all subordinate States under the Mogul and Maratha governments. In 1804 the company successfully pressed the appointment of a certain chief minister in Hyderabad. In 1815 the company had to interfere because the Nizam's sons offered violent resistance to his orders. The administration of the State gradually sank into chaos. Cultivation fell off, famine prices prevailed, justice was not obtainable, the population began to migrate. The company had again to intervene, and in 1820 British officers were appointed to supervise the district administration with a view to protecting the cultivating classes.<sup>2</sup> These examples are sufficient to show that "from the earliest times there was intervention by the paramount Power, in its own interests as responsible for . . . India, in the interests of the State, and in the interests of the people of the States."<sup>3</sup>

The paramount Power was then the company acting as trustees of and agents for the Crown, and the Act of 1858 merely changed

<sup>1</sup> *The Native States of India*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Indian States Commission*, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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the machinery through which the Crown exercised its powers.<sup>1</sup> Paramountcy has always been based on treaties, engagements and *sanads* (grants from the Crown to the ruler of a State) made to individual States and supplemented by usage and by government decisions embodied in political practice. In considering this relationship the Indian States Committee observed (in 1929) that it cannot be maintained that any of the States now in being ever possessed full sovereignty, and so held international status. "Nearly all of them were subordinate or tributary to the Mogul Empire, the Mahratta supremacy or the Sikh kingdom and dependent on them. Some were rescued, others were created, by the British."<sup>2</sup> The Rajput chieftainships, the only ancient political groups surviving in India, were only saved from destruction by seeking shelter within the sphere of the political system of the British.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Hastings brought all India except the Punjab and Sind either directly under British administration or under its control to the extent of foreign policy and the acceptance of British arbitration in interstate disputes. It was also understood that the princes should defer to British advice to cure scandalous misrule.<sup>4</sup>

Amherst in the disputed succession of Bharatpur in 1825 intervened as the paramount Power in the internal affairs of a State "to prevent anarchy and misrule."<sup>5</sup> But the company after making its precedents returned to a general policy of non-intervention. The Government of India was not then prepared to incur the responsibility of ensuring reasonably good government in the States as an incident of paramountcy. The lesser responsibility

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Indian States Committee*, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 23-24. But Appendix III to *Report* (pp. 59-73) should be read in this connexion. It gives the opinion of eminent counsel "that a complete sovereignty was held by the Indian States when they came first in contact with the British power", a different construction is placed upon "usage and sufferance," and the term "subordinate co-operation" is limited to military matters. "This opinion the Committee could not accept."

<sup>3</sup> Sir A. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*

<sup>4</sup> For a summary of Lord Hastings' policy see *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 262, 263.

<sup>5</sup> Sir C. Metcalfe in his Minute of August 1825 to the Governor-General, quoted at length by Thornton, *op. cit*, pp. 482-483

was taken of a feudal superiority which simply entailed wardship, escheat and the right of confirming succession. Escheat, an easy method of dealing with inefficient administration on the failure of lineal heirs, involved the repudiation of the Hindu practice of adoption. This created serious discontent among the princes, and was undoubtedly one of the contributory causes of the mutiny in 1857.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Amherst left India in March 1828. His successor Lord William Bentinck had sailed from England a month earlier and took up his appointment in July of that year. Bentinck had been Governor of Madras from 1803 to 1807, and had been recalled with the Presidency commander-in-chief after the Vellore mutiny.<sup>2</sup> His policy as Governor-General can be summed up in the words Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.

The government finances were most unsatisfactory and Bentinck, under definite instructions from London immediately began his campaign of public economy by large and highly unpopular reductions. He carried these out through civil and military committees and by making a tour, early in 1829, to Penang, Singapore and Malacca.

The allowances of the officers of the company's army were halved, but the cuts were unequally felt, and pressed most heavily on the junior officers, and this at a time when recent reductions in the establishment had seriously affected promotion. The commander-in-chief protested vigorously, but the Governor-General had received his orders from the Directors and the decision was final.<sup>3</sup>

On the subject of the army it may here be said that in 1833 Bentinck assumed the appointment of commander-in-chief and issued two orders directly affecting the Indian ranks. He gave

<sup>1</sup> *Modern India*, ed. Sir J. Cumming, 2nd Edn. Ch. II., by Sir W. Barton, pp. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>3</sup> See *History of British India*, Mills and Wilson, Vol. IX. Edn. 1858, pp. 168-172.

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extra pay for long service and he abolished flogging. In abolishing flogging, a humane and excellent measure in itself, Bentinck was before his time. Corporal punishment was not abolished as a peace-time sentence in the British army until 1868, and consequently Bentinck's decision made a highly improper and invidious distinction between the king's regiments serving in India and the company's Indian troops. Twelve years later Indian courts-martial were again empowered to give corporal punishment.

In 1835 Bentinck wrote a comprehensive minute on the army and the military situation in general, and gave his conclusion that the Indian army was the "least efficient and the most expensive in the world." There was some justification for this sweeping assertion. The Indian units had undoubtedly deteriorated since 1818. They were no longer organized and equipped by their commanding officers, whose control had been lessened; the reorganization of 1824, when regiments were divided, had taken a number of British officers away from their own men; many of the best officers were selected for staff employ; and there was a growing lack of interest and loss of close personal touch by the British officers as regards their men.

In no service in the world is the personal factor of more vital importance than in the Indian army, where sympathetic knowledge of his men is an essential qualification in the British regimental officer. Until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the British officers, out of touch with Europe altogether and without English society, had no interests outside India. Their men were their absorbing interest, the regiment their home. In their private lives the company's officers had "orientalized" themselves to an extent which taught them the language, the habits and the feelings of the people of the country.

Then came the immense change which steam and the overland route brought to India. Books from England and European news no longer half a year old, and above all English ladies, freely and comparatively rapidly arrived in the country. Indian cantonments began to bear a resemblance to the modern military station, new interests sprang up, and the zenana naturally disappeared.

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The British officers with the Indian units were discontented with regimental duty and embittered by the reduction in pay. They were as a rule the least efficient officers in the service, and many of them were too old for their regimental rank.<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast to the British officers of the succeeding generations who have served and are serving with the Indian army.

In addition to civil retrenchment, the members of the civil service were irritated by the Governor-General's institution of confidential reports, to ascertain the merits, or the defects, of officials. Thornton describes this as inquisitional espionage, and confidential reports were soon dropped.

*The Civil Service.*

A source from which the company had been accustomed to make large profits was the Bengal opium monopoly. But after the Maratha war, when peace came to the country, Malwa began to grow the opium poppy to an extent which seriously threatened the company's trade. Malwa opium was taken through Indian States to Diu and Daman where it was bought by European and Indian merchants, who then exported it under the Portuguese flag, to undersell the company's products. In 1820-21 six hundred chests were exported from Daman; in 1827-28 the number had risen to four thousand.<sup>2</sup>

*Opium.*

The Governor-General was not prepared to accept the serious loss incurred by this private trading free of transit duty. It was not possible directly to forbid the growth of the poppy in States which were internally independent. But in 1829, after other measures had failed, most of the princes of Malwa and Rajputana were persuaded to sign treaties which, "in consideration of annual payments, and allowing for internal supply, conceded to the British agent the unnatural privilege of paralysing national industry and

<sup>1</sup> For the Governor-General's minute see *Life of Lord William Bentinck*, Boulger, pp. 177-201. For Indian Army conditions see Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I. Book I. Ch. II., "The Sepoy Army—its Decline."

<sup>2</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV., footnote to p. 177.

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extinguishing native enterprise."<sup>1</sup> This led Bentinck to agree to set free the growth of opium in the States, while the Indian private growers sent their opium direct to Bombay and paid licence duty to the company.

Bentinck, as the whole trend of his policy in India shows, was, for the age in which he lived, a statesman of advanced "Liberal" views. But the policy of the Government of India in regard to opium has undergone a complete transformation since his day. Opium is still a State monopoly, grown only under strict supervision, and with rigid control of the price at which licensed vendors may sell it. But during the twelve years ending with 1931-32 the area under poppy cultivation in British India was reduced by 75·4 per cent, and in 1931 was almost confined to the United Provinces with a total of about 36,500 acres.<sup>2</sup> Much has been done by the Government of India, and also by the Indian States, in recent years to reduce "black spots" (areas where the use of opium is immoderate) and to remedy such abuses as the administration of the drug to babies. The government policy is not the total suppression of the use of opium, except for smoking. Opium is largely used in the malarial tracts, and whatever its real value may be this could not be interfered with at present without causing grave and widespread discontent.<sup>3</sup>

Two measures were taken by the Governor-General which added considerably to the revenue. The first of these was the "resumption," in the permanently settled areas, of land formerly exempt from assessment but whose holders were found on inquiry in 1829 to have illegal or invalid titles.<sup>4</sup> The second was the land settlement made in the north-western provinces by Mr. W. R. Bird, whose assessments were fair though in some cases rather heavy.

<sup>1</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. p. 175 (paged incorrectly as 173).

<sup>2</sup> *India in 1931-1932* (Govt. Printing Press, Calcutta), 1933, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, 1930-1931* (H.M. Stationery Office), 1932, pp. 437-442.

<sup>4</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX. pp. 179-181.

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On his arrival in India, Bentinck found that the civil service establishment was too small for its duties. Over-worked officials were not able to keep in constant touch with the people, and the provincial courts were heavily in arrears with accused persons awaiting trial for long periods.

*Administrative  
Reforms.*

Cornwallis in his settlement of Bengal had, with only small exceptions, given the entire control of the civil and criminal administration to Europeans. But gradually it had been found necessary as well as natural to employ Indians to try their fellow-countrymen for minor offences, and in 1827 "nearly nineteen-twentieths of the original suits instituted in the civil courts throughout the country were already determined by native judicial officers."<sup>1</sup> Just before Bentinck became governor-general a new and higher grade of Indian judge was created to hear appeals from these lower courts.

Sir Charles Metcalfe represented that "the best form of government with a view to the maintenance of British dominion in India was that which was "most simple and most free from artificial institutions." His plan may be summarized as: Indian functionaries in the first instance in all departments; European superintendents, uniting the local powers of judicature, police and revenue, in all their branches, through the districts they administered; commissioners over them; and a board over the commissioners, communicating with and subject to the immediate control of the government.<sup>2</sup>

For the efficient government of the country a larger body of officials was absolutely necessary, but the cost of the additional Europeans, to the number required, was quite prohibitive. Bentinck therefore decided to employ Indians more extensively and to institute reforms on the lines suggested by Metcalfe.

The board of revenue was set up in Allahabad to hear appeals against over-assessment<sup>3</sup>; commissioners of revenue and circuit were appointed; the collector became also the district magistrate;

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord William Bentinck*, Boulger, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol IX, footnote to pp 182, 183

<sup>3</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX pp. 181, 182.

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the provincial courts were abolished; and Indian officers, including "subordinate judges," were appointed on adequate salaries and given responsible judicial and executive functions.

Until the time of Bentinck the supreme government remained in Calcutta through the hot weather. Ootacamund *Hill Stations.* was used as a sanatorium<sup>1</sup> in Southern India, but the Himalayan hill stations did not exist. Although part of Simla had come into the possession of the company after the Nepalese war it was not until six years later, in 1822, that the first English bungalow was built among its deodars and rhododendrons, and a small European settlement sprang up. The rest of the hill was bought from the Maharaja of Patiala in 1830. Amherst visited the place in 1827, and it was at Simla that Bentinck received Ranjit Singh's mission in 1831.

From this time onwards Simla became the summer capital of the Government of India, the yearly exodus of its departments from the plains to the hills was looked upon as a matter of course, and the secretariat offices on the hillside were gradually built. Bentinck also bought, from the Raja of Sikkim, the site on which Darjeeling now stands.

But over and above the boon of hill stations to Europeans, and beyond his departmental reforms, Bentinck's administration is associated with events which stand as signposts in the evolution of modern India.

An Act was passed in 1832 which repealed the provisions requiring jurors to be Christians,<sup>2</sup> and the Charter *Charter Act,* Act of 1833 introduced changes of the greatest 1833 importance into the constitution and administration of the East India Company.

Whig principles were in the ascendent; the Reform Bill had just been carried; Macaulay was Secretary to the Board of Control; and James Mill, the disciple of Bentham, was examiner of correspondence at India House.

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op cit*, Vol. III. p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, 2nd Edn., p. 81.



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By the Act the company retained their administrative and political powers for another term of twenty years "in trust for His Majesty, his heirs and successors, for the service of the Government of India" as vested in "the Governor-General of India in Council."<sup>1</sup> But the tea monopoly and China trade were taken away and the company, no longer a commercial body, was required to close their mercantile business and wind up their affairs.<sup>2</sup> The import and export trade had already been abandoned. As the House of Commons committee were told in 1832 the company had quite enough to do to govern.

The board of control remained, and no material alteration was made in the system of the executive government in India, but on the legal side important changes were introduced. The governor-general in council was empowered to make laws and regulations, subject to reservations which prohibited any law or regulation affecting the prerogatives of the Crown, the authority of Parliament or the rights of the company. Parliament maintained the right to legislate for India and to repeal Indian Acts. A fourth member of council, who was not to be of the company's servants, was appointed, and the first legal member was Macaulay. The confused and sometimes conflicting Presidency regulations were to be codified and an Indian Law Commission, with Macaulay as its most prominent member, was appointed for the first time.

Among other clauses the Act required the Government of India to inquire into and mitigate conditions of slavery, and extinguish it as soon as emancipation should be "practicable and safe." Slavery was made illegal by Lord Ellenborough ten years later.

The change, which was to come a century later, in the status of the provinces illustrates the constitutional development of India. For, by the Charter Act, all executive legislative powers throughout British India were vested in the hands of the Governor-General in council. But nothing in the Act was more striking than clause 87,

<sup>1</sup> The supreme government in India had previously been officially termed the Governor-General of Bengal in Council

<sup>2</sup> For details of government redemption of stock see Ilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

which declared that "no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the Company."<sup>1</sup>

In their covering despatch the Directors wrote: "The meaning of the enactment we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in British India. . . . Fitness, wholly irrespective of the distinction of races, is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility. . . . To this altered rule it will be necessary that you should, both in your acts and your language, conform; practically, perhaps, no very marked difference of results will be occasioned."<sup>2</sup> Nine years before the Act was passed, Sir Thomas Munro, equally distinguished as soldier and administrator, had looked forward to a time when "the character of our Indian subjects would have so far improved as to enable them to govern and protect themselves."<sup>3</sup>

Warren Hastings and Duncan had respectively founded Islamic and Sanskrit colleges in Calcutta and at Benares *Education.* in 1781 and 1792, but throughout the country education, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was at a very low ebb. The self-supporting village schools, with their Brahman or Moslem teachers, could not deal with the overwhelming number of boys, while education for girls practically did not exist. There were hardly any printed books either in the classical or the vernacular languages, and western education had not been introduced.<sup>4</sup>

The Directors of the company, who had most reluctantly allotted a lakh of rupees a year "for the encouragement of the learned natives of India" under the Charter Act of 1813, actively resented the stress laid seven years later on Oriental poetry. They had suggested<sup>5</sup> "any learning that is useful; but poetry is not useful and

<sup>1</sup> For provisions of the Act see Ilbert, *op. cit.* pp. 81-89.

<sup>2</sup> 10th December 1834. India and Bengal Despatch Book, Vol. III No. 44 of 1834 para. 103 *et seq.* (India Office Records).

<sup>3</sup> Minute of 1824 quoted by Mayhew in *The Education of India*.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I p. 379.

<sup>5</sup> *The Education of India*, p. 11, quoting a despatch of 1824.

we suspect that there is little in Hindu or Mohammedan literature that is."

In the meanwhile the watchmaker and secularist David Hare, with a group of Hindu gentlemen, had founded in 1817 the institution which later became known as the Presidency College, and started as "Anglicists" the violent controversy with the "Orientalists." The Orientalists supported the traditional policy of teaching through the medium of the classical languages. The Anglicists were equally determined that the grants of money should be spent on "English education" as the only means of spreading western culture. Ram Mohun Roy, who then knew no English but was deeply read in Sanskrit, was on the side of the Anglicists; and so were the missionaries William Carey, who founded Serampur College in 1818, and Alexander Duff.<sup>1</sup>

When Macaulay arrived in India the education committee at Fort William was equally divided between Anglicists and Orientalists, and the matter came before the Council. Bentinck's sympathies were in favour of English education; so were Macaulay's. In February 1835 Macaulay wrote his celebrated minute. He admitted that he had no knowledge of Sanskrit or Arabic, but he took what he described as a parallel case. "Suppose a Pasha of Egypt . . . were to appropriate a sum for the purpose of reviving and promoting literature and encouraging learned natives of Egypt, would anyone infer that he meant the youth of his Pashalic to give years to the study of hieroglyphics, to search into all the doctrines disguised under the fable of Osiris, and to ascertain with all possible accuracy the ritual with which cats and onions were anciently adored? Would he be charged with inconsistency if instead of employing his young subjects in deciphering obelisks he were to order them to be instructed in the English and French languages?"<sup>2</sup>

The parallel between the long-forgotten writing of the priests of Ancient Egypt and the language which has enshrined the living faith and culture of Hindu India for three thousand years is hardly exact. How far Bentinck, who "wrote more minutes than all the

<sup>1</sup> See *Education of India*, pp. 9-20.

<sup>2</sup> The Minute is quoted in the *Life of Lord William Bentinck*, pp. 152-157

other Governors-General of India put together,"<sup>1</sup> but who "read very little" and that "not without pain,"<sup>2</sup> was moved by Macaulay's references to farriers and to girls at an English boarding-school, or influenced by a misleading comparison between English and Sanskrit literature, it is impossible to say. But the governor-general had been nearly seven years in India, he believed English civilization to be sound while Hindu civilization had obvious defects, and in the interests of economy Indians with a knowledge of the language of the ruling race were necessary for the administration and development of the country.

On 20th March 1835 Bentinck issued the resolution dated 7th March,<sup>3</sup> which declared that the funds available for education should be devoted "to English education alone," and that English should be the official language of India. The subsistence allowances which had been given to the students at the Indian colleges were consequently withdrawn—to be restored in the form of scholarships by Lord Auckland, the next governor-general.

Higher education in India was now definitely linked with the English language and this, coupled with the declaration made by Parliament in clause 87 of the Charter Act of 1833, made it possible for Indians to enter the higher branches of the government service. This was the direct result of Bentinck's policy, which incidentally had another effect, a bond of unity which Akbar himself had been unable to devise. Educated Indians today, from Peshawar to Cape Comorin, have in English a common language in which they can speak together—a means of communication which no single vernacular tongue could supply.

The company supposed that by educating the strictly limited literary classes, education would "filter" down through them to the great mass of the illiterate people of India, a theory which ignored the obstacles of caste and class distinction. An educational system was not introduced into British India until Sir Charles Wood, afterwards Lord Halifax, wrote his momentous despatch in 1854.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Curzon, *British Government in India*, Vol. II. p. 195

<sup>2</sup> Lord William Bentinck to James Mill: Boulger, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> See *History of India*, Marshman, Vol. III. p. 64.

If Bentinck's introduction of English as the official language of British India was the feature of his policy which *Sati*. led to the most far-reaching results, the abolition of *sati* was the most striking act of his administration.

The term *sati*, or *suttee*, strictly refers to the person, not the rite. It means a "pure and virtuous woman" and was applied to a widow who sacrificed herself at her husband's death, either by burning, or burial alive. The custom was a survival from a past at least as distant as the human sacrifices of the Druids, which had been stamped out by the Romans in Britain. *Sati* had been discouraged by the Muhammadan rulers and sometimes forbidden, Akbar on one occasion riding out from his palace and rescuing a victim from the flames. It was forbidden in the territories under the personal rule of the Peshwa, and various Hindu princes had from time to time prohibited it.

Historical records give many instances of wholesale *sati*, as in the kingdom of Vijayanagar; and scores and hundreds of women were sometimes burnt, voluntarily or unwillingly, on the death of a king. For more than two thousand years the woman who completed a life of conjugal devotion by *sati* was held in the highest honour. But *sati* was not an essential part of Hinduism. It is not alluded to by Manu, who stated in regard to widows: "A faithful wife who wishes to attain in heaven the mansion of her husband, must do nothing unkind to him, be he living or dead. Let her emaciate her body . . . but let her not, when her husband is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man. Let her continue till death, forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue. A virtuous wife ascends to heaven even though she have no child if, after the decease of her lord, she devote herself to pious austerity."<sup>1</sup>

British Governors-General, beginning with Lord Wellesley, had made half-hearted efforts to end a custom which it was impossible

<sup>1</sup> *The Institutes of Manu*, Edn. 1825, Vol II (tr. by Sir William Jones), pp. 167-168.

to think of without horror, and which the court of Directors urged ought to be suppressed. In 1827 the matter was placed in the hands of the governor-general. Bentinck landed in Calcutta a year later, feeling as he said, "the dreadful responsibility hanging over his head, in this world and the next, if, as the Governor-General of India, he was to consent to the continuation of this practice one moment longer, not than our security, but than the real happiness and permanent welfare of the native population rendered indispensable."<sup>1</sup>

He took the views of the judges, the army (where the custom seems to have been unknown, certainly for a generation),<sup>2</sup> the police, the civil service, and a number of private individuals, including leading Hindus, and found distinct diversity of opinion.<sup>3</sup> Not only did he meet with strong Hindu opposition in certain quarters, he was also seriously warned of the possible consequences by more than one of his higher officials. But the Governor-General showed more courage and resolution than Amherst. He was supported by Bayley and Metcalfe, and on the 14th December 1829 he issued his Regulation XVII. This "declared the practice of *sati* illegal, and punishable by the criminal courts as culpable homicide in Bengal"<sup>4</sup>. A similar enactment was promulgated in Madras, and legislation to the same effect, but for local reasons in a different form, was carried in the Bombay Presidency. The practice, condemned by the law of British India, survived in some of the States until Lord Hardinge succeeded in getting it suppressed before he left India in 1848. But the old tradition cannot be said to have then died out altogether, for cases have since occurred from time to time. As recently as 1930 a widow in the Hazaribagh district made an attempt to commit *sati*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, footnote to p. 190.

Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 54, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Sati* was then most prevalent in Bengal; and of the 463 cases in the Presidency in 1828-29, 309 took place in the Calcutta division. Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX. p. 189 and footnote.

<sup>5</sup> *Moral and Material Progress of India, 1930-1931* (H.M. Stationery Office), p. 543.

In his summing up of Bentinck's record in India, Thornton, in  
*Thuggee*. startling contrast to Macaulay's panegyric,<sup>1</sup> considers  
 that, excepting the "noble triumph of the aboli-

tion of *sati*, if his administration were obliterated, posterity would  
 scarcely observe the deficiency, while it is certain they would have  
 little reason to regret it."<sup>2</sup> It was, however, under Bentinck's rule  
 that the dreadful secret society of stranglers known as thugs, which  
 Akbar and Aurangzeb had failed to stamp out, was first systematically  
 and successfully dealt with, although gangs were known to exist  
 forty years later. There have been cases of murder since 1877 which  
 may quite possibly have been perpetrated by thugs; and while it  
 is never safe to assert that any ancient practice in India has been  
 entirely suppressed, it may be assumed that the professional poisoner  
 of today is the lineal descendant and representative of the thug.

Thugs<sup>3</sup> were highly organized gangs of hereditary murderers  
 who lived on the money and property they took from their victims.  
 The method of a gang was as simple as it was horrible. The thugs  
 with every appearance of a pleasant, cheerful and perfectly innocent  
 party, attached themselves to likely travellers on the road, won  
 their confidence, and at a given signal strangled them with handker-  
 chiefs. The dead bodies were rifled and then buried in pits which  
 were consecrated to the Hindu goddess Kali, although thugs were  
 Muhammadans as well as Hindus.

Bentinck created a special department for the suppression of  
*thuggee* in 1829, and to the efforts of Sir William Sleeman above  
 all others the people of India owed their relief from this fearful  
 evil. Between 1831 and 1837, 3266 thugs met their deserts. But  
 the number of their victims in a year had been counted in thousands  
 and one thug alone is said to have confessed to 719 murders.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On Bentinck's statue in Calcutta. See *Life* (Boulger), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindi word for a cheat—a more expressive term meant "bearer of the  
 noose." *Confessions of a Thug*, by Meadows Taylor, is more thrilling in fact than  
 Edgar Allan Poe could be in fiction (first published 1839; Ed. Oxford University  
 Press, 1916).

<sup>4</sup> See *Rambles and Recollections*, Sleeman, 2 vols., first published in 1844.  
 The 1893 edition, edited by Vincent Smith, has notes which supply the gaps  
 due to the author's "characteristic modesty."

Towards the Indian States Bentinck pursued the policy of non-intervention which had been impressed upon him by the home authorities; and this brought about a revival of the earlier disorders and consequent misery and desolation in Central India.<sup>1</sup>

In Oudh the Governor-General, who had the power by treaty and the right to dictate the necessary measures to ensure good government, deserted the one minister, Hakim Medi, who could have reformed the administration. In Hyderabad Nazim-ud-daula, who had succeeded Sikandar Jah, was allowed to dismiss the British officials who superintended the State assessments. Injustice and extortion followed and the country relapsed into disorder. But it is unnecessary to detail the "tumult and anarchy" which the policy of non-interference pursued by Bentinck entailed.

There were, however, times when it became impossible to stand aloof "whilst a tributary or an ally was hastening to destruction . . . and the reluctant Government of India was compelled to interpose . . . both with council and with arms, and placed its conduct in constant contrast to its professions. Inconsistency was therefore the main characteristic of the proceedings of the government in its transactions with the native principalities beyond its own borders . . . The same policy that was disposed to consign Malwa and Rajputana to the renewed horrors of the predatory system, commanded the governor-general to carry his negotiations across the Indus and to establish new relations with Sinde and Afghanistan."<sup>2</sup> The inconsistency was severely punished; but the results belong to a subsequent period.

In 1831 Bentinck was induced by a rebellion in Mysore caused by misrule to act under a clause of the treaty of 1799 and place the country under the direct administration of British officials, leaving the raja only his titular dignity and a liberal allowance. The administration greatly improved, the foundations were laid

<sup>1</sup> See Mill and Wilson, *op cit*, Vol IX pp 253 *et seq.*, where his relations with the States are detailed

<sup>2</sup> Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX pp. 254-255.



for its present prosperity,<sup>1</sup> and it has been admirably governed by its own princes since Lord Ripon restored it in 1881.

Coorg was annexed in 1834 after some hard fighting as a sequel to the defiant hostility of its ruler Vira Raja. This blood-thirsty tyrant had killed all his male relatives, in many cases with his own hands, and after his capital Mercara was taken he was deported to Benares. The Jaintia districts adjoining Sylhet were taken over in 1835 after the ruling chief had refused to surrender men who had kidnapped British subjects and sacrificed them to Kali. British Assam had already been enlarged by the peaceful lapse of Cachar to the government in 1830 on the death of its ruler.

But whatever policy the Governor-General might decide to follow there remained only two sovereign powers in India, the English and the Sikh, for the Mirs of Sind scarcely fell within the category of Indian rulers.

Commercial as well as political interests made peace beyond the borders of British India an essential aim of the company. Bentinck signed treaties with the Mirs of Sind which conceded the opening of the Indus "to the navigation of the world." Diplomatic missions were exchanged with Ranjit Singh, who had suspected that these commercial treaties covered plans for annexation,<sup>2</sup> and a treaty of "perpetual friendship" was signed between the British and the Sikh governments in 1831. But a policy of peace beyond the frontier was hardly encouraged by the "benevolent neutrality" of the company when Shah Shuja invaded Afghanistan in 1833 to regain his throne from Dost Muhammad, his rival in possession. The immediate result of this invasion was the defeat of Shah Shuja at Kandahar in July 1834 and his return to Ludhiana.

The diplomatic horizon was not, however, bounded by the neighbouring States of the Punjab and Sind. Minto had embarked upon a policy of wider alliances in anticipation of French aggression, a threat which soon dissolved. But since the days of Napoleon another European power had risen in the East and the dread was

<sup>1</sup> Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 191-198.

founded of a Russian advance upon India. "The British Government at home laid down the principle, big with momentous consequence, that the independence and integrity of Afghanistan are essential to the security of India."<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of Thornton,<sup>2</sup> Bentinck did "less for the interest of India and for his own reputation than any who had occupied his place since the commencement of the nineteenth century, with the single exception of Sir George Barlow." Marshman takes a contrary view.<sup>3</sup> But it is beyond question that Bentinck's governor-generalship marks the beginning of modern India and that this was largely due to the effects of his policy.

When he laid down his office in March 1835 he had seen many changes. The company no longer engaged in trade and their fleet of Indiamen had been dispersed, the members of the civil service and the officers of the Indian army were abandoning their eastern mode of life, and western education had become the official policy.

From the standpoint of the European in India the greatest change in conditions was the spectacular shortening of the time taken to travel between England and India. This improvement has steadily gone on until what once meant at least six months at sea in a sailing vessel was reduced to under a week when Imperial Airways landed mails from London at Karachi on the 5th April 1929.

Steam first "brought England to India" when the *Enterprise*, helped by her sails, reached Diamond Harbour at the mouth of the Hooghly on 8th December 1825, having left England on the 19th August.<sup>4</sup> In 1830 the overland route by Suez was first opened, and in 1836 the Bombay government were able to congratulate the court of Directors on the arrival of despatches from London in forty-five days.<sup>5</sup> The first of the Peninsular Company's steamers was the *William Fawcett* of 206 gross tonnage and 60 horse-power,

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III pp 80-82

<sup>4</sup> *India Gazette*, 12th December 1825.

Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX pp 215, 216 and footnote.

built in 1829, which traded with the peninsula of Spain. The company became the Peninsular and Oriental in 1840, and sent the *Hindustan* of 1800 tons, its first vessel to go to India, by way of the Cape in 1842.<sup>1</sup>

These were improvements in the conditions of English men and women living in India, and came from the progress of science. But a change of a deeper character was the direct outcome of Bentinck's own policy.

Warren Hastings, who may fairly be described as the first and last governor-general of the company, had looked at India through the eyes of its inhabitants. A good Oriental linguist, he had a great and wise understanding of their ways and outlook on life, and far from wishing to change the customs of the people he sought to rule them by their own methods. He aimed at a revival of Indian learning, he mixed freely with Indians on the friendliest terms, and he firmly held familiarity with the languages, customs and religions of the country to be essential qualifications for the company's servants.

Cornwallis, the first of the Parliamentary pro-consuls, knew nothing of the country and could not speak a word of any of its languages. He sincerely wished to benefit India, and from his personal standpoint one of the ways in which this could best be done was to create a landed aristocracy similar to the county families in his own country, out of the *zamindars* of Bengal. This was the first experiment in westernization, and it was hardly a success.

Bentinck revolutionized educated India by the introduction of the English language and western teaching, with the consequent influx of European democratic ideas. For good or for ill the greatest change which the country has seen since the coming of Islam is the westernization of the politically-minded classes in India.

<sup>1</sup> *P. & O. Pocket Book*

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

### CHRONOLOGY

- 1823-1828. Lord Amherst Governor-General.  
1824-1826. First Burmese War.  
1826. Storming of Bharatpur.  
Annexation of Assam.  
1828-1835. Lord William Bentinck Governor-General.  
1830. Annexation of Cachar.  
1831. Mysore administered by the company.  
1833. Charter Act. E.I.C ceased to be a trading body, legislative powers of Governor-General in Council defined.  
1834. Annexation of Coorg.  
Macaulay appointed Law Member of Council.  
Failure of Shah Shuja's invasion of Afghanistan.  
Ranjit Singh annexed Peshawar.  
1835. Education Resolution.  
Foundation of Medical College, Calcutta.

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Thornton is too prejudiced to give a full account of Bentinck's administration and Marshman is a fairer, if enthusiastic, guide.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Consolidation of British Rule

AFTER the retirement of Lord William Bentinck, Sir Charles Metcalfe acted for a year as governor-general, and in August 1835 he repealed the press regulations to give journalism in India greater freedom than was then allowed in England.<sup>1</sup> Although this was popular in Calcutta it ruined Metcalfe's chances of having the confirmation of his appointment pressed by the Directors upon a Board of Control which could make political use of the patronage.

Sir Robert Peel, in his short-lived ministry of 1835, appointed Lord Heytesbury to succeed Bentinck. But the Whigs came in again shortly afterwards and Lord Melbourne revoked the appointment and substituted Lord Auckland, who took the oaths at Government House, Calcutta, on the 20th March 1836. Metcalfe resigned the service, and eventually, as Lord Metcalfe, became Governor-General of Canada. During the thirty-four years which he had spent in India, since he came as a boy of sixteen to the College of Fort William, Metcalfe had played a prominent part in the political movements of every court from Hyderabad to Lahore, and "no other officer in India enjoyed to the same degree the respect and confidence of the native princes."<sup>2</sup>

George Eden, Lord Auckland, like his father before him had risen to Cabinet rank in England. He became President of the Board of Trade when the Whigs returned to power in 1830, and First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Melbourne's ministry four years later. The Governor-General elect,

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op cit*, pp. 522-523

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *History of India*, Vol. III pp. 88, 89

at the farewell banquet given him by the Court of Directors, assured his hosts of his "exaltation at the prospect afforded him of 'doing good to his fellow-creatures, of promoting education and knowledge, of improving the administration of justice in India, of extending the blessings of good government and happiness to millions of her people.'"<sup>1</sup>

A quiet even-tempered man of unquestionable ability who made no enemies and cared for nothing but his work, Auckland's appointment seemed safe enough at a time when the Indian treasuries were full and peace reigned over the country. And it seemed at first as if his good intentions might be reasonably fulfilled. But he suffered from the fatal defect of lack of confidence in himself, he was the obedient exponent of the views of the authorities in England<sup>2</sup> and, instead of using his own judgement he trusted to the advice of others, his secretary John Colvin in particular<sup>3</sup>

With the party manœuvres of the Whig ministry, which palmed "lie upon lie upon the world without one redeeming feature,"<sup>4</sup> in defence of its foreign policy, Indian history has nothing to do. But it was the Russophobia of Lord Palmerston and his colleague Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control, which led to the war with Afghanistan and an overwhelming disaster to the British arms.

Defeat, however disastrous, could be retrieved, as it was retrieved later by Nott and Pollock. But the criminal blunder of the first Afghan war had a result which spread far beyond the defiles leading to Jalalabad. In the words of Sir John Kaye, the war in Afghanistan taught the sepoy "a new lesson and the worst, at that time, which he could have been taught. He learnt then, for the first time, that a British Army is not invincible in the field, that the fortune of the company might sometimes disastrously fail. He believed that our reign was hastening to a close. The charm of a century of

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *History of India*, Vol. III. p. 112

<sup>2</sup> Secret Committee Despatch of 25th June 1836 was the guide of Auckland's conduct throughout. *Camb Hist British Empire*, Vol. IV p. 490

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Sir John Kaye describing the "garbled" Blue Book of 1839, which he revised and re-edited in the Blue Book of 1859.

conquest was then broken. In all parts of Upper India it was the talk of the Bazaars."<sup>1</sup>

In his internal administration Auckland was sensible and practical.

*Internal Administration.* Before he had been two months in office his government at the instance of Macaulay removed an undesirable anomaly of judicial procedure. Until then any European might appeal in a civil case from the country<sup>2</sup> courts to the supreme court of the Crown, instead of to the high court of the company which tried all Indian appeals. This Act, which made an equality in the form of administration of justice between the people of India and European residents, raised a storm in the English press in Calcutta against what was called the "Black Act." But as Macaulay represented: "If [the company's high court] is fit to administer justice to the great body of the people, why should we exempt a mere handful of settlers from its jurisdiction . . . If we take pains to show that we distrust our highest courts, how can we expect that the Natives of the country will place confidence in them?"

In his views on Indian education Auckland was an Anglicist. But he was not prepared to accept Macaulay's extremist policy of purely western teaching; and two years after that enthusiastic reformer's departure from India the Governor-General, in 1839, was allowing grants for Oriental publications and refusing to starve existing Oriental institutions.<sup>3</sup> He had substituted the vernacular for Persian in the lower courts of Bengal in 1837, but this had the unforeseen and unfortunate effect of discouraging education among the Muhammadans, a discouragement from which they have not yet completely recovered.<sup>4</sup> Bentinck had founded a reformed medical college in Calcutta for the training of Indian students, which was followed by similar colleges in Bombay and Madras.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sepoy War in India*, Edn. 1872, Vol. I p. 274

<sup>2</sup> The usual term used in India for "country" as distinguished from "urban" is *mufassal* (pronounced "mofussil").

<sup>3</sup> *The Education of India*, Mayhew, p. 25. *Hist. British India*, Mill and Wilson, Vol. IX. pp. 213-215

<sup>4</sup> *Modern India*, ed. Sir J. Cumming, 1932, Ch. VIII, by Sir P. Hartog, p. 124

These were encouraged by Auckland, and "as though to mark India's departure on a westward road a Brahman demonstrator, before a hushed and breathless class of medical students, dissected a human body."<sup>1</sup>

Questions involving religion are always a difficult matter in India, and Auckland's settlement of the company's official connexion with Hinduism showed good judgement. This connexion had been for years a scandal and an offence to pious Hindus and professing Christians alike. While reserving the right to interfere, should the rules of common humanity or order be broken, Auckland put an end to British official interference in the management of the temples, in the religious proceedings of the priests, and in the arrangement of Hindu ceremonies and festivals. The pilgrim tax was abolished, fines and offerings ceased to form part of the government revenue, and no servant of the company could any longer be employed in the collection or management of such money.<sup>2</sup>

Irrigation is of vital importance in Indian agriculture, especially in districts where the annual rainfall averages less than fifty inches.<sup>3</sup> Systems of irrigation such as canals, storage reservoirs and dams had been known at least in parts of India for a longer period than in any other country, with the possible exception of Egypt and Mesopotamia. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mogul works had fallen into ruin, and modern irrigation in India began in 1819 on the old Delhi canal. In 1836-38 Captain (Sir Arthur) Cotton by his work on the great eleventh-century masonry weir on the Cauvery made Tanjore the richest district in Madras.<sup>4</sup>

These were local improvements, and Auckland must be credited with creating the first large irrigation project under British administration. Before he left India he had obtained the sanction of the Directors for Colvin's scheme for the great Ganges Canal,

<sup>1</sup> *The Education of India*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 200, 201.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral and Material Progress of India, 1930-1931*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern India*, 2nd Edn., Ch. XII., by Sir Thomas Ward, pp. 189-191.



and set up a committee to deal with it.<sup>1</sup> But the Afghan war had drained the treasury, and the works were left to be begun and completed by his successors.

The irrigation scheme was produced as a protective measure against a recurrence of the appalling famine of 1837 and 1838 which devastated the Doab from Allahabad to Delhi, following on the drought of 1836. Private and public effort, where there was no organization for famine relief, could do very little, and 800,000 persons were estimated to have died of hunger or disease.<sup>2</sup> "In Cawnpore a special establishment patrolled the streets and the river to remove corpses. In Fatehpur and Agra similar measures were adopted. Hundreds of thousands died in obscure villages. . . . The dead lay on the roadside unburied and unburnt, till they were devoured by wild animals."<sup>3</sup>

The relations between the Government of India and the Indian States and the immediate and ultimate effects of the policy of non-intervention are illustrated in Oudh, which was consistently misgoverned. Since Clive created the buffer State British bayonets had kept its rulers secure on the throne. This had taken from the people of Oudh their one remedy against intolerable oppression—rebellion and deposition—which in a purely Oriental and despotic government was the equivalent to a general election under a modern democratic constitution.

Stipulations made by the company, as in 1801, that the Oudh administration under its own officers should be "conducive to the prosperity" of the people, had proved futile. Bentinck's threat had been ineffectual,<sup>4</sup> and in 1837 Auckland entered into negotiations with the kingdom. With considerable difficulty he induced the king, Muhammad Ali Shah, to accept an alteration in Wellesley's treaty of 1801. By the new treaty the British Government reserved to itself the right of appointing its own officers to carry out the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Auckland*, Trotter, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Trotter, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Economic History of India*, Dutt, p. 431.

<sup>4</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 27, 28.

necessary reforms, " should hereafter at any time gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule . . . seriously endanger the public tranquillity." Indian institutions and forms of administration were to be maintained " to facilitate the restoration of those territories to the sovereign of Oudh when the proper period for such restoration shall arrive." <sup>1</sup>

The home authorities were not prepared to shoulder this responsibility of paramountcy and the treaty was disallowed, although with considerable lack of candour the king was merely informed that the additional subsidiary force agreed to would not be required. Lee-Warner makes the following comment on the Directors' decision: " This ill-considered opposition to the Indian government bore fruit in due course, and nothing but annexation remained for Oudh and other principalities."

The leading factor in the Asiatic question, starting from the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the eastward advance of Russia, and the points of interest to the British Foreign Office were Persia and Afghanistan.

The ambitions of Russia had led her eastward from Georgia, which she annexed in 1801, to a dominating influence at the Iranian court where in 1834 the Russian agent Count Simonich was urging the new Shah Muhammad Mirza to take Herat; an action which was fully justified by repeated acts of hostility committed by its rulers <sup>2</sup>

The situation had changed considerably since 1814, when the British home Government had concluded a defensive treaty with Persia; a treaty from the fulfilment of which England had shrunk in Persia's hour of need.<sup>3</sup> But in point of fact it did not matter to India whether Persia occupied Herat or not, even if she held that city in dependence on Russia. It was a large assumption for Palmerston, the foreign secretary in London, to maintain that the capture of Herat involved imminent peril to the security and

<sup>1</sup> *The Native States of India*, pp. 146-149.

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *The First Afghan War*, Sir H. Mortimer Durand, p. 30

internal tranquillity of the British dominions in India; while it was a geographical absurdity for him to say that Afghanistan was then the Company's frontier. It was separated from British India by the Punjab, Bahawalpur, Sind and the Rajputana desert, which as Sir Mortimer Durand observed was in itself alone no bad frontier.<sup>1</sup>

Nor had the British Government any quarrel with Afghanistan. Dost Muhammad had risen to power in that country by his own ability in 1826 and he had successfully defeated Shah Shuja's efforts to win back his throne eight years later. He had a grievance against the British for their "benevolent neutrality" to Shah Shuja on that occasion; and Peshawar, which had been taken by the Sikhs, was in the hands of the company's ally Ranjit Singh. However, in May 1836 the Amir sent a formal letter of welcome to Auckland, referred frankly to his difficulties with the Sikhs and volunteered to be guided by the governor-general's advice.<sup>2</sup>

In July 1837 the Shah of Persia moved on Herat and the first Russian scare began in England, encouraged by an alarmist pamphlet written by (Sir) John MacNeill, the British minister in Persia.<sup>3</sup> In September 1837 Captain Burnes, a daring explorer and entertaining writer, but of only average ability,<sup>4</sup> arrived at Kabul as the representative of the Government of India. His mission was ostensibly commercial, but actually it was political.

Dost Muhammad told Burnes that if the British Government would help him to regain Peshawar he would break off his negotiations with Russia and dismiss the Iranian envoy then in Kabul. In his anxiety to regain the lost province the Amir assured Burnes that he would be willing to hold it in fief from Ranjit Singh and transmit the customary presents.

"There can be little doubt," Marshman observes,<sup>5</sup> "that if Lord Auckland had boldly faced the question and entrusted the solution to Captain Burnes at Cabul and to Captain Wade<sup>6</sup> at

<sup>1</sup> *The First Afghan War*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Camb. Hist. British Empire*, Vol. IV. p. 491.

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Durand, *op. cit.*, p. 34

<sup>5</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 125, 126.

<sup>6</sup> The "British frontier authority," Resident at the Sikh Court from 1827 to 1839 (*History of the Sikhs*, pp. 183, 225).

Loodhiana, it would have been brought to an early and satisfactory issue. The overtures of Persia and Russia would in that case have been definitely rejected and Dost Muhammad, secured as an ally, would have become an effectual barrier against encroachments from the west."

Auckland rejected the proposal. Dost Muhammad made a final appeal to the Governor-General in which he implored him "to remedy the grievances of the Afghans and to give them a little encouragement and power,"<sup>1</sup> to which Auckland sent a contemptuous reply. The Amir then turned to the Russian envoy who made with him and with the Kandahar chiefs treaties which were hostile to British interests, and Burnes left Kabul in April 1838.

British policy in 1838 was what it had been in 1809 when Elphinstone's embassy had been sent to Shah Shuja, "to interpose a friendly power in Central Asia between us and any invading power from the west." Auckland proposed to create this power by encouraging the reluctant Ranjit Singh to invade Afghanistan,<sup>2</sup> under certain restrictions, and by helping Shah Shuja to regain his throne. A tripartite treaty was signed in July 1838, by which the Government of India limited its responsibilities to the appointment of a representative at Kabul, to the supply of officers to discipline and command Shah Shuja's army and to make an advance of money to pay it.

Auckland was soon persuaded that unless the Government of India engaged as principals in the expedition it could only end in complete failure. Sir John Keene was accordingly given supreme command of forces amounting to 21,000 men in an enterprise "universally condemned outside the ministerial circle in Downing Street and the secretaries at Simla."<sup>3</sup> Macnaghten "long accustomed to irresponsible office, inexperienced in men and ignorant of the country and people of Afghanistan," was appointed chief political officer<sup>4</sup>

*First Afghan War*

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 128, 129

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 219-221.

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 132, 133

<sup>4</sup> Durand, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Two months before the field army concentrated in November 1838 the Persians had raised the siege of Herat. The soul of its defence had been a young Bombay artillery officer Eldred Pottinger. He had come to Herat after exploring in Central Asia, and his dispositions successfully foiled all the efforts of Count Simonich and his Russian engineers.<sup>1</sup>

One of the lines of advance of the Afghan Expeditionary Force lay through Sind, with whose independent rulers the company had treaty obligations. The military consideration of safeguarding the line of communications made it necessary to control the country. In order, therefore, to place Shah Shuja on the throne of Afghanistan the Mirs of Sind were made to sign a treaty which practically took away their independence, an independence which had only been preserved from destruction at the hands of Ranjit Singh in 1835 by the determined attitude of Lord William Bentinck.<sup>2</sup>

After terrible hardships the two British columns met at Kandahar, which was entered by Shah Shuja in April 1839; *The First Phase.* and after the capture of Ghazni, Kabul was occupied in August. Sikh troops joined in these operations, but Ranjit Singh died on the 27th June 1839, before the events which "placed the seal of success on a campaign in which he was an unwilling sharer."<sup>3</sup>

An army of 10,000 men was left in the country under a capable general. But shortly after Dost Muhammad surrendered in November 1840 and was sent to Calcutta with a liberal allowance, Elphinstone, who was too old and infirm for the responsibility, was given command of the army of occupation. *Occupation.*

Afghanistan was now under the ostensible rule of Shah Shuja, though it was actually being governed by Sir William Macnaghten. On the strength of his assurance that the tranquillity of the country was "perfectly miraculous," officers were allowed to bring up their wives and families from India. At the same time the Directors in London were urging the Governor-General either to withdraw from Afghanistan altogether or strongly reinforce the army of occupation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 135-139

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 221, 222

<sup>4</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 169, 170.

But Auckland did neither although Persia was now friendly, the Russian expedition to Khiva had failed, Dost Muhammad was a State prisoner, all was quiet in Kalat and Baluchistan, and the western borders beyond British India were absolutely safe from any prospect of invasion.

The Afghans hated the presence of the company's troops in their country and were irritated by the not invariably tactful control of the political officers. By the end of October 1841 the whole country was up in arms.

On 2nd November Burnes and some other British officers were murdered in Kabul by a mob which attacked their house, and the British treasury was sacked. Far from making even an effort to prevent this catastrophe, the British garrison was withdrawn from the Bala Hissar commanding the city, and the whole force encamped in an indefensible position on the plain outside Kabul. Supplies were openly looted, Kabul was in a ferment, but still the authorities did nothing but negotiate. On 23rd December Macnaghten was assassinated by Dost Muhammad's son Akbar Khan outside the gates of the city, and although this took place "within musket-shot of a British army" <sup>1</sup> not a man was moved to avenge him.

On the 1st January 1842 negotiations were reopened with the Afghans. The army under Elphinstone had lost its stores, its morale and, naturally enough, much of its discipline. Nothing was left but to retreat from Kabul. By the convention it was agreed that Afghanistan was to be evacuated, the British forces were to leave behind them their treasure, all their guns except six and the hostages already in the hands of the Afghans, while bills for an indemnity of fourteen lakhs of rupees were drawn on the Government of India, <sup>2</sup> payable after the safe arrival of the force at Peshawar. <sup>3</sup>

On 6th January 1842 the British force—4,500 men, 12,000 followers together with women and children—began their retreat through the snow to the death-traps of the Afghan defiles. On 13th January the one survivor, Dr. Brydon, severely wounded and utterly exhausted,

<sup>1</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 566

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 563, 566

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 191, 192.

rode into Jalalabad. The women and children and the wounded officers, with the married men who remained alive after the passage of the Khurd Kabul defiles,<sup>1</sup> had been transferred into Akbar Khan's keeping. "Elphinstone's army—guns, standards, honour, all being lost—had been itself completely annihilated."

Three months after the British troops left Kabul, Shah Shuja was murdered and his weak and dissolute son Fetteh Jang was set on the throne with Akbar Khan the actual ruler of the country.

On the 28th February 1842 Lord Ellenborough became governor-general in place of Auckland, whose tenure of the appointment had expired.

Whatever else may be said of Ellenborough he at least had energy, although during his short stay in the country he personally illustrated the result "of leaving too much to the erratic caprice of one man"—his own contribution to the debate on the India Bill of 1833.<sup>2</sup>

Ghazni fell to the Afghans on the 6th March, but Jalalabad, Kandahar and Khalat-i-Ghilzai still held out; and *The Third Phase.* on 16th April General Pollock relieved Jalalabad. He then marched on Kabul, which he reached on 15th September. Nott after reducing the country round Kandahar joined up with Pollock at Kabul, and after demolishing a great covered bazaar where Macnaghten's body had been exposed, the British force retired upon Peshawar. Elphinstone had died while a prisoner but the surviving British hostages who had, considering the circumstances, been well treated, came back to India with the army.

The operations which ended in the successful reoccupation of Kabul and the subsequent retirement from Afghanistan were carried out to an accompaniment of proclamations by Ellenborough reflecting alternately his panic-stricken reaction to a slight reverse and a more statesmanlike attitude. His elaborate reception of the gates of Somnath, which he had ordered Nott to bring back from Ghazni, was merely ludicrous. The "return" of the gates did not—even for the Hindus—"avenge the insult of eight hundred years" as the Governor-General proclaimed. They had been made by

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 195

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 214

Sabuktigin, had never been in India, and could not therefore have been removed by Mahmud of Ghazni. There was no temple of Somnath to which they could be restored, and the gates eventually found a resting-place in the lumber room of the fort at Agra.<sup>1</sup>

The disastrous business of Afghanistan was ended, not by what Thornton describes as the "masking and mummary" of the military pageant at Ferozepore, at which Ellenborough originally intended to parade the Afghan prisoners, but by the return of Dost Muhammad to Kabul, where he reigned until his death in 1863. At his final interview with the Governor-General he said: "I have been struck with the magnitude of your power, of your resources, with your ships, your arsenals, and your armies; but what I cannot understand is why the rulers of so vast and flourishing an empire should have gone across the Indus to deprive me of my poor and barren country."<sup>2</sup>

Dost Muhammad had been "by turns the rejected friend, the enforced enemy, the honourable prisoner, the vindictive assailant" of the British in India. Early in 1857, through Sir John Lawrence and Sir Herbert Edwardes, he finally became a faithful ally. Three months later the Mutiny broke over Upper India. But when the Punjab was so drained of its European and staunch Indian troops "as almost to invite an Afghan invasion, and when the priests of Kabul and the Amir's own sons were calling him to bind on his head the green turban of Islam and sweep the English from the plains of India,"<sup>3</sup> he held to the word he had spoken: "I have now made an alliance with the British Government, and come what may I will keep it till death."

The relations of the Government of India with the Mirs of Sind during the Afghan war have already been described. Ellenborough went a step further and annexed the country.

Viewed from a military standpoint, Sind was a weak point on the

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op cit*, Vol III pp 230, 231

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Aitcheson, p 12.



frontier. It was under the divided control of its mirs and guarded the "most important of imperial interests," the water-way of the Indus. From the political point of view: "If Sind had not fallen to the company it must have been annexed either by Afghanistan or Lahore."<sup>1</sup> But when the manner in which the annexation was made is considered, no fairer opinion can be quoted than that of James Outram, the Bayard of India, in a letter to his close personal friend Sir Charles Napier: "I am sick of *policy*; I will not say yours is the *best*, but it is undoubtedly the shortest—that of the sword. Oh how I wish you had drawn it in a better cause!"<sup>2</sup> Outram, when political officer in Sind, reported<sup>3</sup> that the "changeable puerile and divided chieftains" were not a source of danger; and he urged, when pleading their cause in England, that they "never contemplated opposing our power and were only driven to do so from desperation."<sup>4</sup>

In 1842 Ellenborough replaced Outram in Sind by Sir Charles Napier, who was given full military and political powers. He was bent on annexing Sind, and a number of charges against the mirs, such as levying river-tolls contrary to treaty, were soon collected. The pressure brought upon the chiefs caused a popular outbreak on 15th February 1843, and two days later Napier heavily defeated the Sindians at Miani and again routed them, at Dabo, in March. Sind was then annexed with the exception of Khaipur whose ruler had supported the British. Napier became the first governor of the province and ruled it with considerable firmness until 1847.

The Maharaja of Gwalior Javaji Rao Sindia was a child, and the regent was loyal to the paramount Power, but *Gwalior*. in 1843 control of the country had fallen into the hands of the military party. The army, a body of 30,000 men partly officered by Europeans and men of mixed descent, was ill-disciplined, and the state had fallen into serious misrule. In conjunction with the existence of the formidable Sikh kingdom, with its 70,000 troops,

<sup>1</sup> Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of James Outram*, Goldsmid, Vol. I p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

<sup>4</sup> Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 596-608, fully describes affairs in Sind.

the unruly forces of Gwalior constituted a danger to the peace of India.

Ellenborough, however, refused at first to intervene. But in December 1843 he was obliged to use force. Sir Hugh, afterwards Lord, Gough the commander-in-chief, entered Gwalior, accompanied by the Governor-General, and beat the State troops at Maharajpur and Paniar.<sup>1</sup> In the treaty signed on 13th January 1844 the Governor-General emphasized the principle that the "British Government was bound to protect the person of His Highness the Maharaja, his heirs and successors, and to protect his dominions from foreign invasion, and to quell serious disturbances therein,"<sup>2</sup> and he brought to a final issue by limiting the State army, Sindhia's right to maintain forces at a strength which might be dangerous to himself and a threat to his neighbours.<sup>3</sup>

As Lee-Warner remarks: "Beneath the policy of isolation the principle began to be observed that each separate State was one of a family, and that a common defence and a common welfare were objects deserving of attainment."

As regards the outward symbols in the evolution of paramountcy, the British sovereign's image and superscription instead of the Emperor's had appeared on the company's coinage since 1835. Ellenborough wished to go further, and tried to induce the Mogul Emperor to resign his title in the Queen's favour. Had his idea been carried out Victoria would have figured as *Padshah Ghazi*, the Islamic equivalent to the *Fidei Defensor* which Henry VIII had been granted by the Pope for his thesis against the protestantism of Luther.

Ellenborough was almost entirely occupied with external affairs, but during his time in India two important reforms were made.

The organization of the existing police force of British India originated in Sind after its annexation in 1843, a measure due to its governor Sir Charles Napier. This came to maturity in the Act of 1861 which established a purely

<sup>1</sup> Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 39

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Camb. Hist. British India*, Vol. IV. p. 606.

civil constabulary capable of all police duties, and further improvements were made later, notably in the time of Lord Curzon. But at this point, the birth of the present system of law and order, something may be said of the policing of the country up to the time of Lord Ellenborough.

Certain points of similarity in the customs of the Aryan invaders of India and the Saxons who invaded Britain have already been noted. The police systems of the two peoples also bore points of resemblance. Both were based on land tenure. In England the thane in the time of Alfred had to produce the offender or pay the damages. In India the *zamindar* was bound to apprehend all disturbers of the peace and to restore the stolen property, or make good its value. Subordinate tenure holders under the Indian system had their share of responsibility for law and order.

In large towns the police were under an official known as the *kotwal*, but the actual executive police of the country was mainly represented by the village watchman. His responsibilities entailed the detection of thefts and the restitution of stolen property, or in default he and the village community between them had to make up the value. The watchman could call upon the villagers to help him, parallel to the "hue and cry" and the duty of all private persons in England.

Mogul police administration, as given in the edict of Abu-l-Fazul, Akbar's minister, rested, as in Saxon and Norman England, on a system of mutual security. It was reinforced by the obligation to report changes of address to district prefects of police, and the help of all neighbours in cases of theft, fire "or other misfortune," was emphasised.

The system failed as soon as the Mogul power came to an end and all higher control disappeared. When the company took charge of the provinces, district magistrates were appointed; but this brought no improvement, and efforts were made to strengthen the village police. The first attempt to introduce expert control came in 1808 when superintendents ranking with modern inspectors-general of police were appointed in Bengal. But the select committee of 1832 found the subordinates to be corrupt, inefficient and oppressive,

while the superior officers were too overworked to exercise proper supervision.<sup>1</sup>

The semi-military police force in Sind was a forward step in organization; and at the same time efforts were made to improve conditions elsewhere in a branch of the administration which Marshman has described as "disgracefully neglected and inadequately remunerated. One magistrate was considered sufficient for a population of a million, and the largest scope was thus afforded for the venality and oppression of the native police officers, whose allowances for half a century had been barely sufficient to cover their travelling expenses."<sup>2</sup> Wilberforce Bird, vice-president in council, secured some increase in pay, and established the office of deputy-magistrate to which all castes and creeds were eligible, which greatly improved the efficiency of the department.

There were at that time millions of slaves in India, and the question of slavery had been referred to the Law Commission appointed under the Charter Act of 1833. In 1843 a law was passed, through the efforts of Bird, which abolished slavery in British India by a stroke of the pen.

State lotteries had long since been abandoned in England, but they took place twice a year in India until Ellenborough did away with them in 1843. The proceeds of the lotteries had been used for the improvement of the Presidency towns.

On 15th June 1844 Ellenborough learnt that the court of Directors had revoked his appointment. Their opinion of the Governor-General is reflected in Thornton's summary of his administration<sup>3</sup>: "His purposes were formed and abandoned with a levity which accorded little with the offensive tone which he manifested in their defence, so long as they were entertained. His administration was not an illustration of any marked and consistent course of policy; it was an aggregation of isolated facts." He had, moreover, devoted his

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Indian Police Commission for 1902-1903, passim*

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op cit.*, Vol III p 268

<sup>3</sup> *Op cit.*, p 608.

sympathies to the army at the expense of the civil service, which considerably annoyed India House. Nor had the Directors ever forgiven him for the gate proclamation which had exposed the Government of India to the laughter of England and Europe.

But it must in fairness be said that Ellenborough at least brought the Afghan adventure of his predecessor to the best possible conclusion, that his attitude towards the Directors was doubtless influenced by the fact that he had twice been their master on the board of control, and his general policy had the support and sympathy of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, and Sir Robert Peel.

The new Governor-General Sir Henry, afterwards Lord Hardinge, arrived in India on 23rd July 1844, and his journey illustrates the successive stages of progress in travel to the East, with the exception of the air. He came by the overland route in forty-four days; across France, partly by rail; by sea to Alexandria; by river-boat to Cairo; by coach and four to Suez; and then to Calcutta by steamer.<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge was a veteran soldier of sixty who had greatly distinguished himself in the Peninsula war and at Waterloo. He had twice been what was then known as "secretary at war" in a Tory ministry, as well as secretary for Ireland, and he had shown his judgment to be sound, his decisions clear-cut and his character to be kindly and generous. He told the secretaries to the Government of India, when he took over charge, that he knew almost nothing of civil administration and even less about India, and impressed upon his officials the extreme inadvisability of trying to mislead him.

Within three months of his arrival in India Hardinge passed a resolution which definitely held out the encouragement of office and promotion to the successful students of the government colleges and of private institutions; prospects which materialized when the universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were founded thirteen years later, with degrees corresponding to the B.A. and M.A. of the universities in Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Making of India*, A. Yusuf Ali, p. 265

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Administration*, Thakore, p. 353.

After careful consideration Hardinge reintroduced corporal punishment in the Indian Army. Under the old system the yearly number of sentences of flogging had never exceeded 700. Under the new rule introduced by Bentinck, increasing insubordination in the service had substituted 10,000 sentences of hard labour on the roads in gangs with thieves and felons, a punishment which inflicted indelible disgrace on the families of the soldiers concerned. The degrading punishment of flogging still persisted in the British Army and the decision was a difficult one; but, as Marshman says,<sup>1</sup> "It is grateful to record that the punishment was so rarely inflicted that (Hardinge's) order became a dead letter."

A most important improvement made during Hardinge's administration was the carrying out of the canal schemes projected by his predecessor. Canals have always been of the greatest benefit to India, and the Ganges canal, 525 miles in length, which is still among the greatest irrigation canals in the world, was begun, to be completed in 1854.

In about 1845 surveys were begun on both sides of India for the construction of railways leading from Bombay and Calcutta into the interior of the country. But no construction work was started until the time of Hardinge's successor Lord Dalhousie.

By the influence of British paramount authority the Governor-General induced the rulers of Indian states to abolish *sati*, female infanticide, and slavery within their territories, and before he left the country he had received the assurances of twenty-four princes and princesses of India that these reforms were being faithfully carried out.<sup>2</sup>

In his last year of office Hardinge determined to suppress the practice of the primitive tribes of Orissa to make human sacrifices to increase the fertility of their fields. The measures he took in the Hill Tracts were not, however, successful and it was not until 1854 that the persistent efforts of the Government of India brought about the substitution of animals in this magical rite.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 272-273.

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 308.

But the relations between the Company's Government and the Sikh kingdom are the main features of Hardinge's administration.  
*The Punjab.*

Ranjit Singh had found the Punjab a waning confederacy broken into factions, pressed by the Afghans and the Marathas and ready to submit to British supremacy. He consolidated the petty States into a great military kingdom, possessing a thoroughly efficient army of nearly 50,000 regular troops with more than 350 guns, and about 60,000 well-armed yeomanry and militia<sup>1</sup>. He held in check, though with difficulty, the Pathan tribes with his troops and fortresses at the mouth of the passes; and as long as he lived the Sikh kingdom was in friendly alliance with the British.

The situation abruptly changed when the great Maharaja died in 1839. Ranjit Singh's power had lain in the masterful strength of his personality, he had founded no permanent institutions, and his death was the signal for anarchy in the kingdom. After a series of murders in the struggle over the succession, Dhulip Singh the five-year-old son of Ranjit Singh was proclaimed Maharaja in 1843, with Lal Singh chief minister. But the supreme power rested with the army. The Sikh forces, which had been completely out of hand since the death of Ranjit Singh, had no restraining influence as the foreign officers had been driven to escape from the country for their lives in 1841.

Neither the military leaders who were constantly in fear of mutiny, nor the State officials who were obliged to make concessions to the soldiery they were unable to pay, had any definite scheme of policy. "They drifted, as more civilized States in modern times have also drifted, into 'doing something,' and surface currents decided what that something should be."<sup>2</sup> The Afghan campaign, and reports of unrest in some of the company's Indian regiments lessened Sikh respect for the British power. Macnaghten writing to Auckland from Kabul in 1841 had urged the Governor-General to "crush the Sings, macadamize the Punjab and annex the province of Peshawar to the dominions of Shah Soojah"<sup>3</sup>; and in 1843,

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 222 and footnote

<sup>2</sup> *The Native States of India*, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *op cit*, Vol. III p. 275

with the object lesson of Sind before them, the Khalsa had the impression, however erroneous, that the British intended to annex their country.

It was peculiarly unfortunate that at so critical a juncture Clerk, who was Wade's able and wise successor, should have been withdrawn from the Sikh court and replaced in 1844 by Colonel Broadfoot. The new Resident had energy and ability, but he was distrusted by the Sikhs, and his appointment was generally held by the English in India greatly to increase the probabilities of war.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the perfectly natural distrust with which the Government of India viewed the confusion, crime and general restlessness in the Sikh kingdom made a concentration of troops on the Punjab frontier an unavoidable precaution. In 1838 the company had only 2500 men and a battery of artillery near the Sikh border. Auckland sent up considerable reinforcements, and these were increased by Ellenborough, who saw the political situation "in the light of an armed truce," to about 14,000 men and 48 field guns.<sup>2</sup>

On the 11th December 1845 the Sikh army of 30,000 men at the lowest estimate<sup>3</sup> with 150 guns under the command of Lal Singh and Tej Singh crossed the Sutlej and invaded the territory of their British allies. In his proclamation of the 13th December the Governor-General emphasized the desire of his government that there should be a strong Sikh administration in the Punjab to control its army and protect its subjects. He went on to say that "he had not abandoned the hope of seeing that important object effected by the chiefs and people of that country," but that war was now declared because the "violators of treaties and the public peace" required punishment.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Hugh Gough, with the Governor-General serving under him as

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 270-282 and footnote

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote to p. 279. *Cont. Hist. British India*, Vol. IV. p. 549, gives the total strength on the frontier, exclusive of hill stations, as 17,612 men and 66 guns, when Ellenborough left India

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 291 and footnote 1, but see footnote 3 to p. 290, which gives a higher figure.

<sup>4</sup> *The Native States of India*, p. 140.



a volunteer, marched upon the Sikh army near Ferozepore with about 17,000 men and 69 guns. Mudki, on 18th December, was a British success. The Sikhs fought in the "soldiers' battle" of the campaign, as they have always fought—magnificently—and they deserved better leaders. On the night of 21st December, after the first day of the battle of Firozeshah, "the fate of India trembled in the balance." But Gough was a leader of the greatest determination and Firozeshah was won next day after a desperate fight. The British casualties were 2415 killed and wounded, and the Sikh losses were much heavier.<sup>1</sup>

The British victory of Aliwal followed on the 28th January 1846, and an incident which took place when the fight was over is worth recalling. By order of the Governor-General a roval salute was fired from the British camp and the bands played the national anthem. The Sikhs on the opposite bank of the Sutlej followed suit and their bands were heard playing "God save the Queen."<sup>2</sup> The decisive battle of Sobraon was fought on 10th February and Lahore was occupied by the British ten days later.

The Governor-General was not prepared to annex the Punjab; it would have been contrary to the company's declared policy and would have meant an army of occupation of prohibitive size. Nor could he support the existing government, which was selfish, intriguing and unstable, by making a definite subsidiary alliance. The treaties of Lahore, signed on 9th and 11th March 1846, were a compromise.

The terms of peace included the Sikh renunciation of all territory south of the Sutlej; the annexation by the British of the Jullundur Doab between the Sutlej and the Beas; the ceding of Kashmir and Hazara in perpetual sovereignty to the company; the reduction of the Sikh army to 20,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and the surrender of 36 guns in addition to those taken in action; the Maharaja was recognized and the company disclaimed interference in the internal affairs of the Sikh kingdom. A force was to occupy Lahore until

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikh* footnote, pp. 296, 297.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, General Sir Charles Gough and A. D. James, p. 119.

the end of the year to protect the Maharaja and ensure the execution of the terms; and Henry Lawrence remained as agent at the Sikh capital.<sup>1</sup>

On the 16th March, by the treaty of Amritsar, Hardinge established Raja Ghulab Singh, the Rajput ruler of Kashmir, in the subordinate sovereignty of Kashmir,<sup>2</sup> which had been taken over from the Sikhs in lieu of a war indemnity. Kashmir was granted as "the independent possession" of Ghulab Singh and the heirs male of his body. This limitation of tenure bears on the question of adoption and lapse which was already engaging the attention of the Government of India<sup>3</sup> and was to become a prominent feature of Lord Dalhousie's policy. In token of British supremacy the Maharaja was required by the treaty to present "annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmir shawls."

Ghulab Singh had started life as a trooper in Ranjit Singh's army. He had received Jammu as a reward for gallantry, and as a minister of the Khalsa he had taken a leading part in the negotiations after Sobraon. His elevation to the throne of Kashmir was unpopular among the Sikhs,<sup>4</sup> and Lal Singh the chief minister of the Lahore government instigated Shaikh Imam-ud-din the late governor of the country to raise an insurrection in October 1846. This was promptly put down by Henry Lawrence with a British force assisted by 17,000 of the Sikhs who had recently been fighting the company; and Lal Singh was deported.

The Sikh government, to avoid anarchy in the kingdom, asked for a continuance of British support, and by the revised treaty of 16th December 1846<sup>5</sup> an arrangement was made which was only short of annexation. The Company assumed administrative control. A Sikh council of regency was appointed to act under a British Resident who was given an efficient establishment of assistants to

<sup>1</sup> For text of the Treaties see *History of the Sikhs*, Appendices XXXIV., XXXV.

<sup>2</sup> For text of Treaty see *Ibid.*, Appendix XXXVI.

<sup>3</sup> *The Native States of India*, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p. 319.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix XXXVII.

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direct and control every department of the government, internal and external, and a British garrison was kept in Lahore. The British Resident was Henry Lawrence, and he with the assistants of brilliant promise and fulfilment whom he chose may be called the "shadow administration" of the famous Punjab commission which was to come.

The strictest economy was now a pressing necessity and the Governor-General made drastic reductions in the army, which had been increased since 1838 by 120,000 men. Hardinge disbanded the police battalions and reduced the rank and file of the company's forces by 50,000 men. But at the same time he organized three moveable brigades of all arms at Lahore, Jullundur and Ferozepore.<sup>1</sup>

On the 12th January 1848 James Ramsay, tenth Earl of Dalhousie, became Governor-General. His predecessor left India with the conviction that "it would not be necessary to fire another shot in India for seven years."<sup>2</sup> That Henry Lawrence sailed with him, when he went to England two months later, was as unfortunate as the withdrawal of Clerk from the Sikh capital in 1844. But nothing could have prevented the second Sikh war.

British control over the Lahore government could only have been effective had the company's authority been universally felt and recognized. But the Sikhs, although they numbered barely one-sixth of the population of the Punjab, were united in the proud memory of their achievements, and they were not yet inclined to settle down as farmers. A signal for a rising could still set the Punjab in a blaze; and that signal was given three months after Dalhousie took office.

Mulraj, governor of Multan under the Lahore administration, had sent in his resignation; and Vans Agnew, a civil servant, was ordered down from the Punjab nominally to superintend the installation of the new governor but actually to take over the management of the country and introduce a

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, pp 303-305.

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 308.

new system of finance and revenue.<sup>1</sup> Opposition to this radical change was certain, but Sir Frederick Currie, the Resident at Lahore, sent no force with which to support this policy. An escort of 350 Sikhs and Gurkhas under Lieutenant Anderson was considered enough. With the connivance of Mulraj the two British officers were murdered at Multan on the 20th April. Mulraj then issued a proclamation calling upon the people of the province, of every creed, to rise against the English in a religious war.<sup>2</sup>

Lieutenant (afterwards Sir) Herbert Edwardes who was at Bannu covered fifty miles by road and river in twenty-four hours in a gallant though unsuccessful effort to take Multan and crush the insurrection. But the Government of India deferred action during the hot weather, on the advice of Lord Gough. In September General Whish laid siege to Multan, but the defection of the Sikhs forming the bulk of his force soon compelled him to retire.

By this time the Punjab was up in arms. The Maharani, a source of widespread intrigue, had been deported, but the Sikh army was burning to fight and there was not "a chief or an officer who was not eager to shake off the yoke of the foreigners and again to enshrine the national idol of Sikh supremacy."

The Sikhs openly gathered under Sher Singh and Chattar Singh, and Gough concentrated his troops at Ferozepore. On 5th October Dalhousie, before leaving Calcutta for the front, made his pronouncement: "I have wished for peace. . . . I have striven for it. . . . But unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance."<sup>3</sup> The Governor-General had written to the Secret Committee in London on the Multan outbreak: "There is no other course open to us, but to prepare for a general Sikh war, and ultimately to occupy the country"<sup>4</sup>

Gough crossed the Ravi on the 16th November<sup>5</sup> and, after two

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *op cit*, Vol III p 311.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Trotter, p. 38

<sup>4</sup> 7th October 1848, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1849, XLI p 374.

<sup>5</sup> Dalhousie to Wellington dated 7th December 1848, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Lee-Warner, Vol I p 191

minor actions, met the Sikh main army of 30,000 to 40,000 men at Chilianwala on the afternoon of 13th January 1849. Sher Singh manœuvred to force an action and Gough advanced to the attack with 14,000 troops and about an equality in artillery. The British losses were 89 British and 43 Indian officers killed, the casualty lists showed more than 2200 killed and wounded, and four guns and the colours of three regiments were lost. The news of the battle made a bad impression in England, and it was decided to supersede Gough by Sir Charles Napier.

But Chilianwala was not a defeat. Better leading by subordinate commanders and the coming of darkness enabled the Sikhs to remain on the field, but their own losses had been heavy and their confidence was shaken. On the 21st February Gough won a brilliant and complete victory at Gujrat on the Chenab. The second Sikh war was over.

On the 29th March 1849 the Punjab was annexed by proclamation and the Maharaja having resigned his sovereignty in favour of the company was pensioned and required to reside outside the state. By the terms agreed upon,<sup>1</sup> "The Gem called the Koh-i-noor, which was taken from Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk by Maharajah Runjeet Singh, shall be surrendered by the Maharajah of Lahore to the Queen of England "

A board of government was appointed to administer the Punjab consisting of Henry and John Lawrence and C. E. Mansell, who was replaced in 1851 by Robert Montgomery. Under them were the pick of the north-western province, Barnes, John Nicholson, Edwardes, Edward Thornton<sup>2</sup> and many other young soldiers and civilians. The Punjab became known as the non-regulation province and "the accessibility of the officers and the personal influence they gained did more for the pacification of the country than regiments of soldiers."<sup>3</sup> Under Sikh rule the only officers of state had been soldiers or tax-gatherers and the punishments fine or mutilation. Nor had there been a civil court outside Lahore. Instead of the mountains

<sup>1</sup> *Dalhousie*, Lee-Warner, Vol 1 pp 242, 243

<sup>2</sup> The historian, and author of the *Gazetteer of India*

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Aitchison p 59

their rule. On the other hand the princes claimed the right to govern their subjects as they pleased and were under the impression that the surrender of a single attribute of power would entail the loss of all authority.<sup>1</sup> Consequently annexation by the company was the only alternative to serious misrule. After 1858 annexation was abandoned; and higher conceptions of co-operation and union, coupled with the personal responsibility of rulers, took the place of the more sterile policy inherited and improved by Lord Hastings.<sup>2</sup>

The misrule of Oudh by the king's favourites was scandalous. But Sleeman the Resident who reported upon the administration of "fiddlers and eunuchs . . . the knaves who surround and govern the king," was opposed to extreme measures and represented to the Governor-General and to India House that the country could be brought under British control without appropriating the revenues or wholly superseding local agency. To the chairman of the court of Directors he pointed out that a line of conduct "most profitable in a pecuniary view" might be most injurious in a political one, an opinion emphatically endorsed by Henry Lawrence,<sup>3</sup> and he expressed his conviction that the doctrines of what he described as "the absorbing school" must sooner or later produce a crisis in British India.<sup>4</sup> Dalhousie held that, badly governed as Oudh undoubtedly was, the consistent loyalty to the British of its rulers precluded annexation, but he advised complete British control. The Directors, however, who had rejected Auckland's proposals for reform twenty years earlier, would not listen and, by their orders, Oudh was annexed in February 1856, and its king dethroned.

<sup>1</sup> The safeguarding of the rights of the ruling Princes of India under the paramount Power is instanced in the Butler Report of 1929 (para. 58), where the Committee record their "strong opinion in view of the historical nature of the relationship between the paramount Power and the Princes, that the latter should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature." See also report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform [Session 1933-34, Vol. I. Part I., p. 86 (para. 154)]

<sup>2</sup> *Native States of India*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Kaye, *Hist Sepoy War*, Vol. I p. 137 and footnote.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Outram*, Goldsmid, Vol. II. pp 97, 98.

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Upon the rejection of these views of the authorities in India by the court of Directors Sir John Kaye makes the following comment<sup>1</sup>: "That the measure made a very bad impression on the minds of the people of India is not to be doubted; not because of the deposition of a king who had abused his powers; not because of the introduction of a new system of administration for the benefit of the people; but because the humanity of the act was soiled by the profit which we derived from it; . . . we had simply extinguished one of the few remaining Mahomedan States of India that we might add so many thousands of square miles to our British territories and so many millions of rupees to the revenues of the British Empire in the East. And who, it was asked, could be safe, if we thus treated one who had ever been the most faithful of our allies?"

But when the influence of India House had been swept away after the shock of the events of 1857, it was the opinion of those wiser administrators in India which was largely instrumental in leading to the grant of "sanads of adoption" by Lord Canning<sup>2</sup> to remove mistrust and suspicion from the minds of the Indian princes.

Dalhousie prepared a careful scheme for the administration of the new province on the lines which had proved successful in the Punjab, and had he remained in India he would undoubtedly have given these reforms the same personal attention. But he did not take action to disarm Oudh, and Canning who succeeded him in March 1856 took no such precautions and considered one regiment and a battery of artillery a sufficient force to maintain tranquillity in Oudh. The ex-king had not been paid as late as March 1857 any of the allowances conceded by Dalhousie, and the policy of leniency and reconciliation to the change of administration was ignored to the extent of excluding a large number of the Oudh officials from pensions, while sixty thousand disbanded soldiers were in receipt of wholly inadequate allowances.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian States Committee Report*, 1928-1929, p. 15. Lee-Warner, *Native States*, pp. 161-163.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Dalhousie*, Lee-Warner, Vol. II. Ch. IX.

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Another form of annexation, and the one with which Dalhousie's name is generally associated, was annexation by lapse, a policy already explained. But this had been recognized by the Company since 1834 and was not an innovation made by the Governor-General. The rule which Dalhousie adopted in at least five of the cases with which he dealt was simple and direct: "In States owing their origin to our grant or gift, if heirs fail, according to the terms of our grant we annex."<sup>1</sup> Satara, Jaitpur, Jhansi, Sambalpur and Nagpur were consequently taken over by the government. The court of Directors entirely approved of this policy.

The original British schemes for general co-operation in the defence of India included contingents of troops furnished by certain states such as Baroda, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Jodhpur and Gwalior, forces which were commanded, equipped and paid by British officers. With one exception these contingents had to be disbanded. In Hyderabad alone was the experiment successful, and this led to Dalhousie's settlement of the liability of its ruler the Nizam for the common defence. By the treaty of the 21st May 1853 the strength of the Hyderabad contingent was established, "of not less than 5000 infantry, and 2000 cavalry, with four field batteries of artillery . . . commanded by British officers, fully equipped and disciplined, and controlled by the British Government through its representative the Resident at Hyderabad." For the payment of the contingent the assigned districts in Berar were handed over to the company.<sup>2</sup>

By war Dalhousie had added the Punjab and Lower Burma to the British Empire, by diplomacy he had secured the western frontier of India, and by his creation of the public works department and by his social reforms he immensely assisted the moral and material progress of the company's possessions.

<sup>1</sup> *Native States of India*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 231, 232.



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When Dalhousie went to India there was not a mile of railway in the country. The first line to be opened was a section of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway from Bombay, on the 16th April 1853; and when the governor-general retired three years later 146 miles were open to traffic and another 150 were under construction.<sup>1</sup> Dalhousie's railway scheme was the system upon which the great trunk lines of India have since been built.<sup>2</sup>

At the Board of Trade, under Sir Robert Peel, Dalhousie had enthusiastically worked for the development of the railways and telegraphs of England. He was equally energetic in India, and his scheme for telegraphs, like his plans for railways, formed the basis of the present system. On the 24th March 1854 the first telegram from Agra reached the Governor-General in Calcutta, and before he left the country the telegraph line stretched from Calcutta to Peshawar. Four thousand miles of wire had been erected at a cost of £217,000 and already a yearly revenue of £23,000 was being derived.<sup>3</sup>

The Charter Act of 1833 had given the Governor-General in council full executive and legislative powers over the provinces of British India. But close control was not practicable while it took at least a week for a dispatch to reach Bombay and Madras from Calcutta. With the establishment of the telegraph and railway systems the freedom of action, previously enjoyed by the provincial authorities, came to an end. The central government was to experience in its turn a tightening up of control by higher authority when the Red Sea cable was laid.

In 1850 Dalhousie brought in a uniform rate of postage throughout the country irrespective of distance, by which an ordinary letter was carried for a half anna stamp, then equivalent to three farthings. Later he arranged with the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie* Lee Warner, Vol. II pp. 191, 196, 199

<sup>2</sup> By 1931 there were 42,281 miles of railway, and electrification of the Madras suburban sections and a small portion of the G. I. P. main line had been completed. *Moral and Material Progress of India, 1930-1931*, pp. 250, 252. It may be noted that this annual statement was first published at the instance of Lord Dalhousie

<sup>3</sup> Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 191, 194.

home Government for a postal rate to England of sixpence for the half-ounce, and in his own words "a Scotch recruit who joins his regiment at Peshawar may write to his mother at John o' Groat's House and may send it for sixpence, which three years ago would not have carried his letter beyond Lahore."<sup>1</sup> Dalhousie created the post of Director-General of Post Offices, and was long enough in India to see 753 post offices opened and his scheme a financial success. The present use of the postal service may be realized by the fact that although in India today only about 14 per cent. of the male population and three women out of every hundred can write, professional letter-writers abound, and 575 million letters and 586 million post-cards were carried in the year 1929-30.<sup>2</sup>

The Governor-General was a strong advocate of education, including the establishment of engineering colleges for Indians, and his Diary bears witness to his hope and confidence that the measures being introduced would soon enable the people of India to take a larger part in its administration.<sup>3</sup>

In 1853 the British Parliament for the first time seriously considered the development of Indian education. The dispatch sent out by Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax) in 1854 outlined the scheme to be followed by the Government of India. A properly articulated system from the primary school to the university was to be established under the direction of provincial Directors of education. Increased attention to vernacular education, both primary and secondary, was prescribed, and a system of grants-in-aid; sympathy was expressed for female education; training institutions for teachers were advocated; and a policy of rigid religious neutrality was emphasized.<sup>4</sup>

Government departments were established in place of the amateur education committees in the Presidencies, and Dalhousie's successor, Canning, set up the universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The policy emphasized by Wood "of extending far more widely the

<sup>1</sup> Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, Lee-Warner, Vol. I. pp. 206, 207.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern India*, ed. Sir J. Cumming, Ch. VIII., by Sir P. Hartog, pp. 124-125.

means of acquiring general European knowledge" was launched. As Professor Thakore has said:- "Without a rigid anatomy of structural uniformity and system, the education of our diverse nationalities would soon cease to be animated by a common spirit, and state agency, legislative and administrative, is the most natural source from which to derive it."<sup>1</sup>

Finance, forest conservancy and jail conditions were other matters which Dalhousie improved. The number of dispensaries was largely increased, the medical service was opened to Indians and a scheme for the reorganization of the medical department was recommended to the Court of Directors. But it is impossible to detail all the Governor-General's activities.

It may be said, speaking generally of his administration, that he simplified procedure by decentralization (he divested himself of the governorship of Bengal) and he freed the secretariats as much as possible from cumbersome regulations and the "imminent risk of a paper war" of office minutes. In a letter to Hobhouse in 1851 Dalhousie wrote: "The Government of Bombay are like an electric telegraph; they for ever talk at one another on little slips of paper, even when they are collected."

Another great administrator took a similar view of departmentalism. Lord Curzon called that feature of government in India "an intellectual hiatus" in a celebrated minute which described how, for fourteen months an important series of papers went "round and round like the diurnal revolution of the earth, stately, solemn, sure and slow, before it occurred to a single human being in the departments that the matter should be mentioned" to the Viceroy. On another occasion Curzon told the Secretary of State that the arrival of a dispatch had caused "a sort of literary Bedlam."<sup>2</sup>

Nor was the ability to write a caustic minute the only resemblance between Dalhousie and Curzon. They were the youngest rulers who have ever been sent from England to India; Dalhousie was

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Administration to the Dawn of Responsible Government*, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, by the Earl of Ronaldshay (Marquess of Zetland), Vol. II, pp. 26, 27, 321.

not thirty-six, Curzon was still under forty. By strength of will each rose above ill-health or bodily suffering to work with volcanic energy, an almost superhuman efficiency and an attention to detail which left their mark on every department of government. They were both determined reformers and they relentlessly pressed incessant changes in an equally "passionate and devoted interest in all that concerned the well-being of India."<sup>1</sup> Autocratic in temperament, neither would brook opposition. The Governor-General, when he had decided that he was justified, showed no more hesitation in annexing an Indian State by the exercise of paramountcy, than the Viceroy to intervene to regulate the government of the princes. Dalhousie and Curzon were equally enthusiastic in their admiration for the ancient monuments of the country, and rescued many gems of architecture from decay and ruin. The first restored the Kutb Minar at Delhi, the other recreated the perfections of the Taj Mahal.

The company's charter was renewed in 1853, not as formerly for twenty years, but "until Parliament should otherwise direct." The most important administrative change made by the Act was the removal from the court of Directors of the right of patronage, which was to be exercised in future by the regulations of the Board of control. These regulations, which were prepared by a committee under the presidency of Lord Macaulay, threw the covenanted service open to general competition.<sup>2</sup>

On the 29th February 1856 Lord Canning, son of George Canning the statesman, became Governor-General, hoping for "a peaceful time of office," but reminding the court of Directors before he sailed that "in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words of the quotation are a reference to Lord Curzon in a speech by Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, in February 1905, (*Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II p. 417).

<sup>2</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, 2nd Edn., pp. 91, 92

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Earl Canning*, Cunningham, pp. 36, 37

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The new Governor-General came to Calcutta in the lull before the storm. Oudh was neither disarmed, strongly held nor contented. The dispossessed Peshwa's son Nana Sahib lived near Cawnpore. The young widowed Rani of the Maratha house of Jhansi felt she had been wronged by the annexation of her State under the doctrine of lapse. To the Hindu rulers as a body the non-recognition of the principle of adoption seemed an invasion of their ancient institutions. Dalhousie's intention of bringing the titular sovereignty of the Mogul emperors of Delhi to an end<sup>1</sup> had roused resentment. Upper India was charged with dangerous forces of unrest and these were centred in Delhi, at Lucknow the capital of Oudh, Cawnpore and Jhansi.

The general mass of the two hundred and fifty million inhabitants of the country were passive, as the people of India in general have always been in times of disturbance. But the upper classes had lost their power and influence, and in many cases their livelihood, with the extension of the company's administration, and they looked upon British methods, the pouring of the new wine of the West, however sound in itself, into the old bottles of the East, with suspicion and hostility.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand a distinguished school of statesmen had newly made their appearance in the Indian States. Ministers such as Salar Jung in Hyderabad, Dinkar Rao in Gwalior, Sakurni Menon in Travancore and Mahava Rao in Indore set an example of improved administration. To the support of the Indian princes, especially the rulers of Hyderabad and the Rajput States and their ministers, England was to owe much in 1857.<sup>3</sup>

The foundation of British dominion in common with that of every other government in the past history of India, was military power, and the company had increased its territory in all directions without increasing its European forces. There was no fear at the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Dalhousie*, Lee-Warner, Vol. II pp. 134-138. But cf. Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 356, 357.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 153-155.

<sup>3</sup> *Modern India*, ed. Sir J. Cunningham (2nd Edn.), Ch. II., by Sir W. Barton, p. 28.

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moment of danger from without. But within the Indian Empire "contentment was seen in submission, loyalty in quiescence," no thought was taken for internal defence, and the disposition of troops was manifestly unsound.

In the company's Indian units the almost incredible length of service permitted to the British officers and the inefficiency of many of them had generally reduced discipline to a perilously low ebb, especially in the Bengal army, and commanding officers were out of touch with their men. This danger was accentuated by the fact that Oudh supplied the company with forty thousand soldiers who were inclined to disaffection and who represented by their family connexions nearly one-tenth of the whole population of the late kingdom. Added to this the Presidency systems of army organization with their varied regulations, especially in respect of field allowances, created serious discontent, which had found expression on more than one occasion in mutiny.<sup>1</sup>

These circumstances all tended towards the appalling and tragic catastrophe of the Mutiny. But the immediate cause was the widely circulated report that the cartridges for the rifled musket, with which the army was then being re-armed, were greased with an objectionable mixture which would destroy Hindu caste and insult Moslem ideas of ceremonial purity. In the opinion of Sir John Lawrence the Indian army implicitly believed "that the universal introduction of cartridges destructive to their caste was only a matter of time. They heard (and believed as they heard) that the measure had been resolved on . . . They thought their only chance of escape was to band together, to refuse the cartridges and to resist if force should be attempted by the Government."<sup>2</sup> There was a basis of fact as regards the existence of such cartridges in experimental ammunition which had come from England, but the obvious and necessary reassurances of the military authorities were outdistanced by the rumours which spread like wildfire through Upper India.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of the Army in India* (Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1924), pp. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Sir C. Auchison, pp. 74, 75.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 488-494, 500, 501, 510-524 and pp. 630-631 in Appendix. See also Appendix, pp. 651-654.

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In February 1857 there was an outbreak at Barrackpore. On 9th and 10th May the Mutiny broke out beyond control at Meerut, and the mutineers instinctively marched to Delhi. From there the rising spread through the north-west provinces and Oudh. Sindia with his minister Dinkar Rao remained loyal to his engagements, but in June the Gwalior contingent mutinied. The Punjab stood firm, even to Peshawar, and eventually 70,000 men, of whom one-third were Sikhs of the Khalsa, were raised by the Punjab government and the chiefs of the province. Hyderabad sent forces to co-operate with the British in Central India and Nepalese troops assisted in the operations further north.

With the promptness and courage<sup>1</sup> which was to save the situation in India, John Lawrence, on 17th May, sent a force of 3800 British and Indian troops to hold the ridge overlooking Delhi, already packed with insurgents, and he despatched a stream of reinforcements as they became available. Delhi was stormed by British troops, loyal Indian regiments of the company, Sikhs Gurkhas and men from Jammu, led by John Nicholson on the 14th September. Bahadur Shah was captured and exiled and his dynasty terminated. The fall of Delhi was the turning-point in the crisis.

Elsewhere the terrible massacre at Cawnpore after Wheeler's surrender to the Nana Sahib on 26th June was followed on 1st July by the siege of Sir Henry Lawrence's Residency at Lucknow. On 25th September General Havelock with Sir James Outram serving under him fought their way in with reinforcements, and in the middle of November Sir Colin Campbell at the head of troops from England raised the siege. The heroic defence of the Residency of Lucknow, which stands beside the achievements of the Punjab force on the Ridge at Delhi, was over. Lucknow was finally taken by the government troops in March 1858. By January 1859 fighting in Upper and Central India was at an end and order was being restored.

<sup>1</sup> There were then in the Punjab 10,300 British troops and 36,000 of the obviously unreliable Bengal army, with 20,000 Punjab irregulars and military police. (*Life of Lord Lawrence*, Archibson, pp 76, 77)

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The shock felt in England by the events of the Mutiny gave the East India Company its death-blow. It was realized that the system of "double government," with its fatal division of powers and responsibilities, could no longer continue, and a Bill was introduced by Lord Derby's Conservative ministry "for the better government of India," which became law on 2nd August 1858.

*End of the Company.*  
*Government of India Act, 1858*

The Act declared that India was to be governed directly by and in the name of the Crown, acting through a Secretary of State, who would exercise all the former powers of the court of Directors and the board of control. The officials of these two bodies were amalgamated to form the India Office, and the Secretary of State was given a council of fifteen members whose decisions he was empowered to overrule but who could interpose a financial veto upon his policy. The property of the company was transferred to the Crown. The expenditure of the revenues of India was to be under the control of the Secretary of State in council, but was to be charged with a dividend on the company's stock and with their debts, and the Indian revenues remitted to Great Britain were to be paid to the Secretary of State in council and applied for Indian purposes.<sup>1</sup> The total Indian debt, after the military operations of 1857-58 had been taken into account, was about 110 million sterling.<sup>2</sup>

As under the Act of 1853, admission to the covenanted civil service was open, by examination, to all natural born subjects of Her Majesty.

Commissions in the army were not then granted by competitive examination and the patronage of military cadetships was divided between the Secretary of State and his council. All the forces, naval and military, of the company were transferred to the Crown by the Act of 1858. The distinction between "Royal troops" and the "Company's European troops," which had existed for more than a hundred years, disappeared. The company's European infantry

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, pp. 94-97.

<sup>2</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, Dutt, pp. 319, 373.



# INDIA

## in 1857

English Miles



East India Company  
Protected States  
Railways in 1857



became British line regiments, and the European artillery of the three Presidencies were amalgamated with the Royal Artillery. This reorganization was completed in 1860. The reorganization of the Indian forces was not taken in hand until 1861 and was completed four years later. In this reorganization all the Indian artillery, with some notable exceptions, was abolished. In 1861 the British officers of what was then called the "Native Army" were listed in the Presidency staff corps, and the three Presidency military establishments remained separate for thirty-five years.<sup>1</sup>

The Act laid down that "Except for preventing and repelling actual invasion of Her Majesty's Indian possessions, or under other sudden and urgent necessity, the revenues of India shall not, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, be applicable to defray the expenses of any military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of such possessions by Her Majesty's forces charged upon such revenues."<sup>2</sup>

On 1st November 1858 the transfer of the government to the Crown and the appointment of Canning as the first viceroy and governor-general was announced in India by royal proclamation, drafted in accordance with Queen Victoria's expressed wishes. The full text is given at the end of this chapter, but, apart from the terms of amnesty which the proclamation contained, the following clauses should be emphasized:

*Royal  
Proclamation,  
1858.*

"We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by Us accepted."

"It is Our will that, so far as may be, Our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to perform."

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of the Army in India*, pp. 18-19

<sup>2</sup> Government of India Act 1858, 21 and 22 Vict. c. 108, Section 55

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### PROCLAMATION BY THE QUEEN IN COUNCIL TO THE PRINCES, CHIEFS, AND PEOPLE OF INDIA

" Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

" Whereas for divers weighty reasons, We have resolved, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in Parliament assembled, to take upon Ourselves the government of the territories in India, heretofore administered in trust for Us by the Honourable East India Company.

" Now, therefore, We do by these presents notify and declare that by the advice and consent aforesaid We, have taken upon Ourselves the said government and We hereby call upon Our subjects within the said territories to be faithful, and to bear true allegiance to Us, Our heirs and successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom We may hereafter, from time to time, see fit to appoint to administer the government of Our said territories, in Our name and on Our behalf.

" And We, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of Our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning to be Our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over Our said territories, and to administer the government thereof in Our name, and generally to act in Our name and on Our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State.

" And We hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to Our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

" We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by Us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and We look for the like observance on their part.

" We desire no extension of Our present territorial possessions; and while We will permit no aggression upon Our dominions or Our rights to be attempted with impunity, We shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as Our own; and We desire that they, as well as Our own subjects, shall enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

## CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH RULE

"We hold Ourselves bound to the Natives of Our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind Us to all Our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, We shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

"Firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion We disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose Our convictions on any of Our subjects. We declare it to be Our royal will and pleasure that none be anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith and observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and We do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under Us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of Our subjects on pain of Our highest displeasure.

"And it is Our further will that, so far as may be, Our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge

"We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the Natives of India regard the land inherited by them from their ancestors, and We desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and We will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India.

"We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field; We desire to show Our mercy by pardoning the offences of those who have been thus misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty.

"Already in one province, with a view to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the pacification of Our Indian dominions, Our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectations of pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against Our Government, and has declared the punishment which will be inflicted on those whose crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of Our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows:

"Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such, the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

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"To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators in revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed; but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off allegiance; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men.

"To all others in arms against the Government We hereby promise unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion of all offence against Ourselves, Our crown, and dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

"It is Our royal pleasure that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the first day of January next.

"When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is Our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer its government for the benefit of all Our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be Our strength; in their contentment Our security; and in their gratitude Our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to Us, and to those in authority under Us, strength to carry out these Our wishes for the good of Our people."

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1836-1842. Lord Auckland Governor-General.
- 1837. Accession of Queen Victoria.
- 1837-1838. Famine.
- 1838. First Afghan War
- 1839. Capture of Ghazni and Kandahar.  
Death of Ranjit Singh.
- 1840. Surrender of Dost Muhammad.  
Insurrection at Kabul.
- 1841. Disastrous retreat of British troops.
- 1842-1844. Lord Ellenborough Governor-General.
- 1842. Pollock recaptured and evacuated Kabul.  
Restoration of Dost Muhammad.
- 1843. Battle of Miani and annexation of Sind.  
Campaign in Gwalior.  
Suppression of slavery in British India.
- 1844-1848. Lord Hardinge Governor-General.

## CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH RULE

- 1845. Danish possessions in India purchased.  
First Sikh War began: Battles of Mudki and Ferozeshah.
- 1846. Battles of Aliwal and Sobraon.  
Treaty of Lahore.
- 1848-1856. Lord Dalhousie Governor-General.
- 1848. Multan insurrection.  
Second Sikh War.
- 1849. Battles of Chilianwala and Gujrat.  
Punjab annexed.
- 1852. Second Burmese War: Pegu annexed.
- 1853. The last Charter Act.  
Jhansi, the Berars and Nagpur annexed.  
First section of railway line opened in India and telegraph system begun.
- 1854. Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch.
- 1856. Oudh annexed.  
Lord Canning Governor-General.
- 1857. May: Outbreak of Mutiny at Meerut.  
June: Occupation of Ridge at Delhi by troops from Punjab.  
September: Delhi stormed; Lucknow garrison reinforced.  
November: Relief of Lucknow.
- 1858. Operations in Upper and Central India and reoccupation of Lucknow (March), Jhansi (April), Bareilly (May), and Gwalior (June); Sindia restored.  
Government of India Act placed British India under the Crown.  
November: The Royal Proclamation.
- 1859. Order restored.

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CHAPTER XIX  
**India Under the Crown**

I  
CANNING TO RIPON

UNTIL 1858 the Government of India rested on the military strength of the East India Company and the garrison of royal troops, while the general security of the country from invasion was further guaranteed, then as now, by British sea-power. The Act of 1858, which put an end to the greatest mercantile corporation the world has ever known, completely altered the basis of government. This now devolved upon a parliamentary Secretary of State for India; the Secretary of State was answerable to Parliament; and as Parliament is responsible to the British people, the ultimate power lay with the electors of Great Britain.

From 1858 until 1919 India was ruled by a great civil autocracy in which authority was concentrated at the centre. The whole structure, from the Secretary of State, through the Governor-General in council, the local governments and the executive officers down to the smallest official, was in theory under the British Parliament. Parliamentary control was, however, in practice limited to alterations in the constitution and the authorization of loans, and its supervision to receiving from the Secretary of State his yearly account of Indian administration and the annual statement of receipts and charges. Indian affairs were tacitly held to be outside the range of party politics.

In 1861 three important Acts were passed by Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert (2nd Edn.), pp. 98-104

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The Indian Civil Service Act regulated appointments to the service, abolished the rule of seniority and, with certain safeguards, allowed outsiders to be appointed to any office.

The Indian High Courts Act amalgamated the courts representing the Crown and the company and established the high courts of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The judges of each court, with a maximum of sixteen, were to be appointed by the Crown. One-third, including the chief justice, were to be barristers and another third to be members of the covenanted civil service. Indians could be appointed, and Rama Prasad Roy of the Calcutta High Court was the first of a line of distinguished Indian judges whose numbers since 1919 have considerably increased. In certain cases appeals from the decisions of these courts, the highest courts in India, lie to the Privy Council.

But the most important legislation of the year was the Indian Councils Act, which modified the executive council and remodelled the Indian's legislatures. A fifth ordinary member was added to the Governor-General's Council, and Canning distributed the work among the members, placing each in charge of a separate department. This converted the council into a cabinet of which the Governor-General was the head.

For purposes of legislation the Governor-General's council was reinforced by a maximum of twelve "additional" members, half of whom were to be non-official and nominated, and some of these seats were allotted to Indians. The new legislative council was restricted to making laws, and as there were no private Bills these were initiated by the executive government.

The Act restored to the governments of Madras and Bombay the power of legislation which the Act of 1833 had withdrawn, but with the difference that the Governor-General's assent was now necessary; and it gave similar powers to Bengal. At the same time the Governor-General in council could still legislate for all the Indian territories under the British Crown.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. pp. 115-116, describes the working of these Councils.

## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

Legislation had been entirely in the hands of British officials until 1861, and it is from this date that Indians have taken part in making laws for India. Their earliest representatives came from the aristocracy, the hereditary landed gentry, religious leaders and government pensioners, men naturally reserved and strongly conservative in their instincts. The Indian universities had only been established for four years and Indian leaders and representatives of the modern type had not yet appeared.<sup>1</sup>

The central government now had effective control over the whole of British India, and this was to lead to administrative uniformity, except in the revenue department which dealt with the widely differing habits and conditions deeply rooted in the various regions of the country. At the same time the administration of the district officers lost its earlier personal note under the regulations of a uniform policy.

The assumption by the Crown of the direct government of India and the proclamation of Queen Victoria began the existing relationship between the Indian princes and the paramount Power. In the words of Lord Canning, the first Viceroy of India: "The Crown of England stands forth the unquestioned ruler and paramount Power in all India, and is for the first time brought face to face with its feudatories. There is a reality in the suzerainty of the Sovereign of England which has never existed before and which is not only felt but eagerly acknowledged by the chiefs."

The policy of annexation in cases such as revolt, misrule and failure of heirs was abandoned, and Canning laid down the two great principles which the British Government has since followed in dealing with the States. The first of these was that their integrity should be preserved by perpetuating the rule of the princes, whose power to adopt heirs in accordance with their religious laws and customs was recognized by *sanads*<sup>2</sup> granted in 1862. The second,

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Administration*, B. K. Thakore, pp. 137-142

<sup>2</sup> A *sanad* is a diploma, patent or deed of grant by a sovereign of an office, privilege or right.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

that flagrant misgovernment must be prevented by timely intervention.<sup>1</sup>

The imperial prerogative was exercised in many ways after the Mutiny by the bestowal of honours, salutes and grants of territorial possessions, but no manifestation of it was received by the princes of India with so much enthusiasm as the issue of the eight-score of *sanads* of adoption or succession. Their influence extended far beyond those who received them, and a new spirit of co-operation and union was spread far and wide.<sup>2</sup> The States had "become in fact part and parcel of the Indian Empire with which their interests are identified and identical."

The *sanads*, which were to knit the princes to the paramount Power, were personal concessions to the individual rulers; for, as Sir Henry Maine said,<sup>3</sup> "While there is only one independent sovereign—the British Government—there may be found in India every shade and variety of sovereignty. The mode or degree in which sovereignty is distributed between the British Government and any native State is always a question of fact which has to be separately decided in each case and to which no general rules apply." About forty of the larger States have treaties with the paramount Power, a larger number have *sanads*, and the remainder enjoy in some form or other recognition of their States by the Crown. A certain number of the States pay tribute.

For half a century political development came slowly. The paramount power protected the country, kept peace and order, and put down organized crime, such as thuggee and dacoity. Such matters as railway policy, the control of posts and telegraphs, imperial taxation (such as the salt tax) and the limitation of armaments, became a joint concern between the paramount power and the States, but the old policy of isolation had not as yet disappeared. Lord Lytton's proposal of a consultative body of princes

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-1929*, p. 15. *The Native States of India*, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *The Native States of India*, pp. 159-162.

<sup>3</sup> Official Minute on the Kathiawar case (1864) quoted by Sir Robert Holland, *Political India*, Ch. XIV. p. 260, and see *States Committee Report*, pp. 25, 26.

## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

came to nothing. The germ of the federal idea had not yet taken shape.

The importance of the Indian States can be realized from the fact that they cover about two-fifths of the country, Burma excluded, with something approaching one-fifth of the total population; an area of 598,000 square miles, with 79 million inhabitants in 1931.<sup>1</sup> The States range in size from the highly developed State of Hyderabad, which is 82,700 square miles in extent and has a revenue of £5,000,000, to holdings in Kathiawar of a few acres and "a revenue not greater than the annual income of an ordinary artisan." In this purely Indian India, suzerainty by major States over feudatory lesser States and *jagirs* is recognized by the Government of India. The States are not British territory and their subjects are not British subjects. But as the Indian States have no international life and are unable in any way to communicate with foreign governments, the paramount power has the duty, by treaty and usage, of protecting Indian State subjects when abroad.<sup>2</sup>

Government in the States varies from patriarchal feudalism up to administrations reaching a high modern standard. There are high courts in forty of the States and thirty possess consultative legislative councils. Each State manages its own internal affairs by making and administering its own laws and imposing, collecting and spending its own taxes. Most of them levy import and export duties at their frontiers. Some mint their own rupee currency. They have their own police, and the more important maintain Indian State Forces for co-operation with the Indian army both in the external defence of India and for purposes of internal order.<sup>3</sup> There is as a rule a British resident or other agent whose duty it is to offer advice to the ruler and to report to the higher authorities.

<sup>1</sup> Only States classified in the *Report of the Indian States Committee* are included in these definite figures. Including States in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, and adding the agencies and tribal areas, the total is 758,000 square miles. Portuguese Goa has one feudatory State.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Indian States Committee*, p. 26. Communication with foreign powers does not, of course, refer to the representative Indian prince who may be nominated to the League of Nations Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> And see *Indian States Committee Report* and *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. pp. 83-91.

Canning's Indian State policy was from the first to create confidence. In 1859, the year before he put forward his general policy, he foreshadowed the closer union about to be established by sanctioning the succession of the illegitimate son of the Raja of Tehri (Garhwal), a case where the British had a clear title to annexation by the doctrine of lapse.<sup>1</sup>

Canning's attitude, in the crisis of the Mutiny, has been described by his biographer<sup>2</sup>: "Lord Canning met it . . . with firmness, confidence, magnanimity, with calm, inflexible justice. On a stage, crowded with heroic personages, he stood—an impressive central figure—too unmoved and too undemonstrative, too completely master of himself to suit the excited tempers and unbalanced judgments of an epoch rife with unprecedented catastrophe; but rising above the onset of ephemeral hostility with a dignity, which, as . . . we are able more justly to appreciate its proportions, places him high on the list of great officers of State."

A measure of this confidence was shown when, in the midst of the staggering events of the summer of 1857, he assembled his legislative council to pass the Act which established the universities of Bombay and Madras on the model of London University. Calcutta University had been similarly founded in January of the same year. The calmness with which the governor-general met the crisis aggravated the European business community into strong hostility, which his subsequent policy of opposition to vindictive repression did not allay. Towards the end of 1857 the European public of Calcutta and Bengal, in a petition to Queen Victoria, alleged that the calamities in India were "directly due to the blindness, weakness and incapacity of the Government." The only notice taken of the petition may be said to have been the Queen's later expressed opinion of Canning's "admirable administration."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Native States of India*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Sir H. S. Cunningham, *Earl Canning*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Earl Canning*, Cunningham, pp. 144, 145. *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. III. p. 453.

In the case of Oudh, Canning's policy, in general most magnanimous, incurred the measured opposition of Oudh. Outram, then chief commissioner of Oudh, and the unbalanced disapproval of Ellenborough and his fellow-members of the board of control in England.

The Oudh proclamation of 1858, with a few specified and loyal exceptions, confiscated the proprietary right in the soil to the British Government, who would dispose of such right as might seem fitting; for Oudh had been the centre of rebellion. But Canning was persuaded by Outram to add that "To those who come promptly forward, and supported the Government in the restoration of order, the indulgence will be large, and the Governor-General will be ready to view liberally the claims which they may thus acquire to a restitution of their former rights."

The taluqdars (landed proprietors) of Oudh responded, and at a durbar in Calcutta in April 1861 the Viceroy said to a representative deputation from Oudh: "No part of Hindustan is more flourishing or full of promise for the future. The ancient system of land-tenure has been restored, but has been placed on a new and clear foundation. The preservation of the great families of the soil has been encouraged and facilitated. The rights of the humbler occupants have been protected. Garrisons have been reduced, police diminished. The country is so tranquil that an English child might travel from one end of it to the other in safety; so thriving that its people have been the most prompt and liberal of all the nations of India in responding to the cry of their famishing brethren of the North-West."<sup>1</sup>

Oudh, unlike most of India, is held from government by a relatively small group of individuals. The estates of these taluqdars are only about 260 in number, yet they cover two-thirds of Oudh and pay today one-sixth of the land revenue of the United Provinces. The most powerful of the "barons of Oudh" possess an almost feudal influence over hundreds of villages. Some of them are the descendants of the old conquering Rajput families, with an ancestry going back to the ninth century, and as a body the taluqdars

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Earl Canning*, Cunningham, pp. 155-165

represent the two great communities. Their common interests consequently cut across the communal divisions.<sup>1</sup>

Canning's allusion to the north-west in his speech referred to the serious famine in Agra, the Punjab, Rajputana and Cutch, due partly to two seasons of poor rainfall and partly to the disturbances in the country. The calamity was most severely felt between Agra and Delhi, where the mortality was estimated at eight and a half per cent. of the population. /

The shock of the events of 1857 and 1858, the most critical years in the history of British India, and their inevitable consequences of social and economic confusion, must not obscure the admirable reforms which Canning, nevertheless, was able to introduce. Of these the measure of the greatest benefit to the greatest number was his policy of protection for agricultural tenants.

Before British rule made peace and order a normal condition, *zamindars*, their intermediaries and the cultivators were bound together by the necessity of defending life and property from gangs of marauders who habitually ravaged the country. With the establishment of British government this common interest disappeared, and the only bond between the *zamindar*, his intermediaries and the peasant was one of hard cash. Simultaneously, with times of greater prosperity, the population rapidly increased and the competition for land became a serious problem involving in its turn increasing poverty. It may here be said that the problem created by a rapidly increasing agricultural population has intensified with the years.<sup>2</sup> Nor has land-hunger been lessened by industrialization, the great feature of modern England, which has little appreciable effect in India.<sup>3</sup>

It was clearly necessary to protect the agriculturist from the excessive rise of rents caused by the exactions of landlords who

<sup>1</sup> *Ind Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> The increase between 1921 and 1931 was 34 millions in all.

<sup>3</sup> Not much over 15,000,000 people are engaged in these forms of industry. See *India, 1931-1932*, p. 111.



were in the position of monopolists, on the one hand, and by the land-hunger of the peasants on the other.

Canning's difficulty was to find a proper basis of legislation between the classes and the masses. He met it by his Bengal Rent Act of 1859, which has been called the charter of the Bengal cultivators,<sup>1</sup> and was the first of a series of Tenancy Acts.

The object of these Acts has been to lessen eviction, and limit the increase of rents usually by making the amount dependent on the order of a court or revenue officer; while the right of occupancy has been extended to other cultivators and the rights of tenants-at-will assured.

Oudh, as has been noticed, differed from most parts of the country, as the taluqdars were virtually the proprietors of their estates, a fact which had not been sufficiently borne in mind by the settlement officers when the province was first annexed. On the representations of Outram and John Lawrence the right of property in Oudh was recognized. The first regular settlement of lands was begun in 1860 and completed eighteen years later, the settlement being for thirty years.

When Sir John Lawrence became Viceroy he made an effort, by the first Oudh Rent Act of 1868 (during the process of the Canning settlement), to protect the cultivators of Oudh on the same lines as Canning had protected the Bengal peasantry. But until 1921 the tenants of the great landholders of Oudh had no security of tenure beyond seven years and had to pay very large premiums to obtain renewal. Agrarian trouble on a large scale then threatened and in that year an Act was passed securing a life tenure for the tenant.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian Penal Code, which had been originally drafted by Macaulay and the first Law Commission in 1837, was passed in 1860; and Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure also came into force.

<sup>1</sup> Romesh Dutt, *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., pp. 263-264.

<sup>2</sup> See *India in the Victorian Age*, pp. 264-266, and *Ind. Statutory Comm. Report* Vol. I. p. 64.

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Heavy expenditure had been incurred by the upkeep of a military police to restore and preserve order, and in August 1860 Canning appointed a commission to examine the whole question of police administration. On the recommendations then made the Act of 1861 was passed by the central legislature of the Government of India. The military police, as embodied to keep order in the country, were abolished and a single homogeneous force of civil constabulary was constituted. General control was put in the hands of provincial inspectors-general, but an inspector-general for the Bombay Presidency was not appointed for another twenty years. The police in each district were to be under European district superintendents and assistant superintendents. Until 1905 the higher police officers were recruited entirely from England and joined as assistant superintendents.

One of the weakest points of the system,<sup>1</sup> which was on the whole efficient, was a neglect to make use of the village police; and this, with other defects, was remedied by Lord Curzon's reforms.

The financial position in 1859 was serious. In fifty-nine years  
*Finance* only four had yielded a surplus. India's debt, by this time about one hundred million sterling, had added to the burden of the taxpayer an addition of two millions for the annual charge of interest. For four years expenditure had exceeded income by an annual average of nine million pounds.

The remedy adopted in 1859 was to raise the tariff duties to their high-water mark. But a duty of 10 per cent. on the imported cotton piece-goods, upon which Indians had come largely to rely, raised the price considerably; and the duty of 20 per cent. on "luxury" articles imported for European consumption made a heavy addition to the taxation of a limited class. The rates were so abnormal as to defeat the objects of a tariff for revenue, and revision was absolutely necessary.

To deal with the situation Canning obtained the services of James Wilson, financial secretary to the Treasury, who came out to India as the first financial member of council in November

<sup>1</sup> See *Report of Indian Police Commission, 1902-1903, passim.*

1859. Wilson issued a State paper currency, imposed a licence tax on various trades and professions, and an income-tax on all incomes above £20 a year. He insisted on the submission of rigid estimates to regulate military outlay (previously a matter of the greatest uncertainty) and also to reduce civil expenditure. Laing, his successor, at the close of Canning's administration, found himself with a surplus, and released from income-tax all incomes below £50 a year.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1861 Lady Canning, whose courage and sympathy had supported her husband in his almost overwhelming anxieties, died at Calcutta. Four months later Canning left India, a dying man. But public opinion both in England and in India had already lost its bitterness in a fairer estimate of the unswerving justice and humanity of Charles, Lord Canning, the first Viceroy of India.

The new Viceroy, the Earl of Elgin, had been Governor-General of Canada, and as special envoy to China had first-hand acquaintance with the Far East. He assumed office on the 12th March 1862, and he died of heart disease at Dharmasala on the 20th November 1863.

The foreign policy of the Government of India was to avoid entanglements in Afghanistan, and this was emphasized in 1862, when the Amir Dost Ali attacked Herat, by the withdrawal of the British Agent from Kabul.

Towards the close of Elgin's short Viceroyalty long-threatened trouble on the north-west frontier came to a head in the Ambela campaign, which before it ended converted a minor expedition into a dangerous war.

Apart from the obligation to keep India safe from foreign invasion the ever-present anxiety of the government has always been that fanaticism may lead the restless and warlike tribes into widespread hostilities. Always, in the minds of the higher command, in a difficult and disadvantageous theatre of war, there is the knowledge that failure to hit hard, rapidly and above all successfully, or to

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Earl Canning*, Cunningham, pp. 201-208

show any sign of weakness or hesitation may set the whole border ablaze. The modern policy of transborder roads, the method by which Wade tamed and bridled the Highlands of Scotland after 1745, will be referred to later. But here it may be said that in a frontier expedition the operations of a column, however large, resolve into affairs of small packets; and the loss of one piquet on a height may bring disaster. Mountain warfare is the modern equivalent to Montaigne's example of the chances of war—"dislodging four rascally musketeers out of a barn, pricking out single from a party and meeting adventures alone." Highly disciplined and well-trained troops with good subordinate leaders are essential where, on the march, protective piquets are continually being sent up and withdrawn and the rear-guard is likely to be hard pressed.

The many frontier expeditions which have been made since the British Government took over the border from the Sikh Khalsa cannot be detailed in this History. But the Ambela campaign, the first of considerable importance, illustrates the difficult problems of the frontier.

Early in the nineteenth century a colony of fanatical Mohammedans, mainly outlaws from British territory, was founded by a British subject, Sayyid Ahmad, in the hills above the borders to the north-east of the present military station of Nowshera. He organized a regular propaganda, with its centre at Patna in Bengal, and agencies throughout India collected arms and funds. These bands were a most disturbing element on the frontier in the time of Ranjit Singh, until Sayyid Ahmad was killed in action in 1831. But his death did not disperse the colony, and the British Government inherited this turbulent legacy from the Sikhs. In 1853 and 1858 expeditions were made and Jitana, the chief settlement, was burnt, but in 1862 the "Hindustani fanatics" again gave trouble.

In October 1863 a strong force under Sir Neville Chamberlain was sent up through the Ambela Pass. The Buner tribesmen joined the Hindustani fanatics. The British column had to await reinforcements; and the effect of the prolonged pause was most unfortunate. Enemies multiplied on all sides from Bajaur and

Chamla, and determined attacks on camps and piquets and one or two initial British reverses followed. More troops were sent up and eventually the campaign was successful and the Hindustani fanatics were finally crushed though with considerable loss.<sup>1</sup> But the affair had grown into an entanglement sufficiently serious to produce a political crisis in which even the fundamental duty of loyalty and allegiance came to be gravely discussed among the Moslem subjects of the British Government.<sup>2</sup>

The Ambela campaign was just over when the new Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, arrived on 12th January 1864 to rule the empire which he had done so much to save.

John Lawrence had been gazetted the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab on the 1st January 1859, a recognition which, in Dalhousie's opinion, the chief commissioner had earned three years earlier. Lawrence held this appointment for barely two months before sailing to England to take his seat in the council of India. His work on a board which had no administrative power was not congenial; and the public personage who most impressed him with his "minute knowledge" of Indian affairs was the Prince Consort.<sup>3</sup>

Four and a half years later Lawrence was nominated Viceroy and Governor-General in succession to Elgin. The appointment met with unanimous approval in England. *The Times* said: "It has been happily determined to break through the charmed circle which has so long restricted the office of Governor-General to the peerage, and to send out to the empire which was formed by the exertions of Clive and Warren Hastings, not only a commoner, but a commoner wholly unconnected with any family of the English aristocracy."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, Nevill, 1st Edn. 1912, pp. 50-62, which gives details of the heavy fighting for the famous Crag Piquet. This book should be referred to for N.-W. Frontier Campaigns from 1849 to 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Aitchison, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Lord Lawrence*, Bosworth Smith, Edn. 1883, Vol. II. p. 363.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 393.

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Lawrence came of a Scottish family which had long been settled in Northern Ireland, and his character showed the patience and self-reliance, the stern morality and the simple faith of the stock from which he descended. He was deeply religious, transparently honest and an extremely hard worker. In his tastes he was homely, in his manner he was outspoken and brusque, but "there was nothing of the bear about him, but the skin." His charity, his sympathy and his kindness of heart were unbounded, and he softened many a reprimand with the simple kindly humour which characterized him.

No political events of any grave importance took place in India during Lawrence's Viceroyalty. A small war in *Small Wars.* Bhutan was undertaken on account of the treatment to which a British envoy was subjected in 1864. The Bhutanese ceded a strip of territory at the foot of the hills for which they were given a small annual payment, and friendly relations with the country have continued ever since.

There were the usual raids on the frontier, and in 1868 a strong force, concentrated from down country with a speed which had great moral effect on the tribes, made a successful promenade through the Black Mountain country without much opposition. The tribesmen very rarely give cavalry an opportunity to charge, but this campaign affords the only example, in the 7th Hussars, of a British cavalry regiment as a body distinguishing itself in this way in Indian border warfare.<sup>1</sup>

When Dost Muhammad died in 1863 a war of succession amongst his descendants plunged Afghanistan into a scene of bloodshed and treachery, while the heir-designate, *Afghanistan* Shere Ali, struggled for the throne. Lawrence refused to intervene, and declared that the British wished to be on terms of friendship and goodwill "with the nation and their rulers *de facto*."

But his policy was not entirely one of "masterly inactivity." By September 1867 Russia had begun the rapid advance in Central Asia which brought her to the northern and western frontiers of Afghanistan. Samarkand had not fallen when the Viceroy urged that Russia should be told politely, but firmly, that her interference

<sup>1</sup> Nevill, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

in Afghanistan, or any other State bordering upon India, could not be permitted; and that friendly negotiations with Russia should be accompanied by help to an established government of Kabul. Consequently, when Shere Ali finally crushed opposition in 1868, Lawrence sent him a present of money and arms. This attitude indicated the policy followed for the next ten years. The Secretary of State had given Lawrence a free hand and his policy was generally accepted at the time. But the practical value of moral recognition without material support in a country like Afghanistan, where no recognized law of rightful succession exists, is another matter.

The outstanding event in India while Lawrence was Viceroy was the terrible famine which swept down the eastern part of the country from Calcutta to Madras, and was so heavily felt in the isolated province of Orissa that the calamity is commonly called the Orissa famine of 1865-66.

The south-western monsoon, upon which India depends for her rainfall, was bad in 1865, and the December rice harvest, the most important crop of the year, failed in many districts. Even before the end of September the price of rice in parts of Orissa had risen to famine rates. A month later the whole country was in panic; markets were closed and the poorer classes were reduced to absolute destitution. By June 1866 the state of affairs in the most stricken districts was appalling, for rice, quoted at thirty-five times its normal price in some places, could not be bought at all. "The people of Orissa, shut up in a narrow province between pathless jungles and an impracticable sea, were in the condition of passengers in a ship without provisions."

Relief works and local committees had been established, but grants of money and payment for relief works were useless. Money had no purchasing power; rice was wanted and rice was not to be had. It was only slowly that the authorities realized that food, not money, was required and that the government must supply it. An advance of £200,000 and the promise of unlimited funds was made to Bengal, but by this time the monsoon of 1866 had broken and the landing of the cargoes of rice on the dangerous Coromandel coast

was a most difficult operation. In the open roadstead of Puri it took seven weeks to unload one steamer, and up to the end of October only 8750 tons of rice were imported.

September brought another calamity in the river floods which overwhelmed a thousand square miles of country, submerged the homes of a million and a quarter of people, and drowned the young crops to a depth of from three to fifteen feet for more than a month. From the double catastrophe of 1866 it is estimated that one-fourth of the population of the alluvial districts perished. In Orissa alone it has been estimated that more than a million persons died.<sup>1</sup>

The direct responsibility for the failure to take timely steps to fight the famine must be laid upon the government of Bengal. The lieutenant-governor had spent his whole official career in the secretariat, and not one of the officers in Orissa had any special experience of famine. The warnings of the collector of Puri were ignored, and from February to June 1866, while people were already dying of starvation in large numbers, not a single report on the state of Orissa was made by the Bengal authorities to the supreme government. And after that, "on every measure of relief there seemed to be written the fatal words 'too late.'"<sup>2</sup> Lawrence had been in favour of importing rice as early as November 1865, but his opinion was not shared by his council<sup>3</sup> and he allowed himself to be overruled, with fatal results.

The Orissa famine was the starting-point of a concerted policy to prevent a recurrence of such tragedies. In 1874 Lord Northbrook took ample and prompt relief measures, and subsequent inquiries showed that no mortality whatever was due to that famine.<sup>4</sup> But it was not until 1901 and the following years that an effective scheme to deal with scarcity conditions was finally evolved.

The immediate lesson taught by the famine was the vital obligation to irrigate Orissa effectively, control its rivers and improve its communications by land and sea. Schemes of irrigation for the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Aitchison, pp. 157-161. *History of India under Victoria*, Trotter, Vol. II. pp. 183-187.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Bosworth Smith, Vol. II. pp. 482-484.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, Aitchison, pp. 161-162.

<sup>4</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., p. 258.



improvement of agriculture, and for railways and roads to ensure distribution, were also set on foot throughout India. Lawrence had been an ardent advocate of irrigation works in the Punjab and had spent large sums on canals. But in India generally irrigation had been neglected, and Lawrence urged its importance as a government undertaking upon the home authorities.

In his letters to Sir Charles Wood at Whitehall he wrote with reference to the railway and canal schemes: "Our main object should be to complete the railways . . . which are the great arteries . . . but I doubt if most of them will pay and in our present financial difficulties I am for postponing them all. What seems to me of very much more importance is the question of irrigation. . . . The misery, the loss of life, the poverty which follow a failure of the rain . . . are almost inconceivable. . . . On the other hand well-considered irrigation works are sure to be a profitable investment . . . add to the resources of the State and enrich the people. . . . We are at our wits' end for revenue: any increase of taxation is sure to produce discontent. Is it not a kind of political suicide cutting from under our feet one great source which is available, namely, from the construction of irrigational works? The surplus . . . will enable us to avoid further taxation, or lighten that which exists. Light taxation, in my mind, is the panacea for foreign rule in India."<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State finally consented that loans should be raised for irrigation works when the surplus revenues were insufficient; and Lawrence created an irrigation department. Twelve years later the total acreage irrigated, by government works in India, was 10,500,000; in 1931 it stood at 31 million acres, representing 12·7 per cent. of the total cultivated area.<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence became Viceroy at a time of great financial difficulty.

*Finance.* The budget of 1864-65 showed a deficit of £880,000, and deficits occurred every year but one of his Viceroyalty.<sup>3</sup> Apart from famine relief and the cost of two

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Bosworth Smith, Vol. II. pp. 493-497.

<sup>2</sup> *India in 1931-1932* (Calcutta, Govt. of India Publication Branch, 1933), p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., p. 373.

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small wars, salaries of subordinates had to be raised in the government departments; the expenditure on forests and on education was doubled; the cost of the medical services was nearly trebled; decent barracks for the European troops were essential; and just under half a million pounds were required for the site of the India Office in Whitehall.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the country was convulsed by a commercial crisis. The demand from Europe, following upon the blockade of the Confederate States in the American civil war, created a tremendous boom in cotton. In 1860 its price was about £44 a ton; in 1864 cotton stood at £189. Enormous fortunes were made, the peasantry in the cotton districts practically coined money, and at the large ports wages almost reached European rates. There were few openings for sound investments and in an orgy of speculation the public, especially in Bombay, plunged into wild-cat schemes, from land reclamation to livery stables. With the collapse of the Confederate States came the inevitable reaction. Cotton fell to about £56 a ton and commercial houses and banks collapsed in the slump of 1866. A Parsi firm failed for three million sterling, a Hindu millionaire failed for over two million, and the Bank of Bombay, which had lent itself to a reckless policy of unsecured advances, went into liquidation.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years earlier another distant war had given a steadier impetus to an Indian industry. The first jute mill was started near Calcutta in 1834, but little progress was made until the Crimean war cut off the Russian supplies. Since then the industry has steadily developed. In 1928 it gave employment to 339,000 hands, and jute now heads the list of Indian exports. Originally the capital was in the hands of the Scottish merchants, mostly of Dundee, whose enterprise had founded the industry, but in recent years the number of Indian shareholders in jute (amongst other industries) has greatly increased. Jute is one of the most satisfactory crops for the cultivator, and is frequently the only

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Laurence*, Atchison, pp. 165-167.

<sup>2</sup> Atchison, *op cit*, pp 163-165, and Bosworth Smith, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp 479-480.

"money crop" he can raise. Before the collapse in prices in 1931 about three and a half million acres were under jute, about 90 per cent. being in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

Disraeli's choice of a successor to Sir John Lawrence was the Earl of Mayo; and there could have been no greater contrast to the gaunt, austere and weary civil servant than the burly master of hounds radiating health and charm of manner who came out to replace him. Mayo's only political experience had been as Chief Secretary for Ireland, and his appointment raised a storm of party protest in the Press. But Gladstone, who came into power before Lawrence's term was over, did not revoke the appointment, and the Liberal ministry gave Mayo its steady support.

The incoming Viceroy had seen the Suez Canal, then about two-thirds cut, when he passed through Egypt. After landing at Bombay he saw evidences of modern progress in India in the Elphinstone college, the Sassoon hospital, the regimental school of an Indian infantry regiment, listened to Seymour Fitzgerald's plan of making cotton inspectors keep a small garden for experiments in the cultivation of the plant, and inspected the latest type of cotton presses, then in use at Bombay, the centre of the Indian cotton industry.<sup>2</sup> The garden scheme has since expanded into a cotton botanist with an expert staff, Government cotton committees and the assistance given by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.<sup>3</sup> In 1851 the first cotton mill had been started in Bombay with British coal; in 1870 there were said to be eleven in the Presidency; in 1875 there were thirty-eight; and the imports of coarse cloths and yarns from England were already appreciably falling off. Fifty years later there were 264 cotton mills in India, run with Indian capital and employing over 300,000 hands.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 182, 327. *India in 1931-1932* p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> From Lord Mayo's Diary, quoted by Sir W. Hunter, *Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Vol. I. pp. 165-170.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 177-182.

<sup>4</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 242-243, and *The Making of India*, A. Yusuf Ali, p. 279.

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Mayo took office on the 12th January 1869. Canning had swept away the method of administration by which reams of official minutes "circulated at a snail's pace in little mahogany boxes from one councillor's house to another."<sup>1</sup> Mayo therefore found himself with a cabinet of seven departmental ministers for foreign, public works, home, revenue and agriculture, financial, military and legislative affairs. Mayo, besides being President of the Council and final source of authority, took over the portfolios of the foreign and public works ministers. "In this oligarchy all matters of imperial policy (were) debated with closed doors."<sup>2</sup>

*The Government of India*

In view of modern political reform the comment made by Romesh Dutt in 1903 on this remark by Sir William Hunter may be quoted: "In this brief but pithy sentence we detect all the strength and all the weakness of Indian administration. The 'oligarchy' comprised the ablest British officials in India, but has never, within a half-century of the Crown administration, admitted an Indian within its body. . . . The people of India have no place within the cabinet; no consultative body of representatives has been organized to advise the cabinet, no constitutional method has been devised to bring the cabinet in touch with the people. The best of governments composed of the ablest of administrators must fail of success when the people are so rigidly excluded from the administration of their own concerns."<sup>3</sup>

Government in India has travelled, since those words were written, an even longer stage than it had advanced in 1870 beyond the military autocracy of the Timurids

Mayo continued the foreign policy of his predecessor. When he met Shere Ali at Ambala in March 1869 the Amir pressed for a treaty and a fixed subsidy. But the Viceroy made it clear that while the Government of India might be prepared to give him money, arms and ammunition, not a British soldier would cross the frontier to put down rebellion.<sup>4</sup> Although

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Hunter, Vol. I pp. 189-190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. pp. 189-195.

<sup>3</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., p. 253.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Hunter, Vol. I. pp. 256-262

## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

Mayo would not support any particular ruler of Afghanistan, he wished to see a chain of friendly, strong and independent kingdoms from west to east beyond the Indian frontier.<sup>1</sup> Negotiations were begun with Russia to create a neutral zone between the Russian and British spheres of influence; the delimitation of the Iranian Baluchistan frontier was carried through; and Mayo succeeded in putting British relations with the King of Upper Burma on a better footing, at least for a time.

In 1870, when civil war threatened in Alwar between the young Maharaja and his leading subjects, Mayo intervened. He called upon that ruler to accept British arbitration and undertake to abide by the result without any condition or reservation, which avoided a direct guarantee from the Government of India to the subjects of the State.<sup>2</sup> The powers of the Maharaja were transferred to a council.

*The Indian States.*

Before Mayo's viceroyalty all the revenues of British India went into one purse, and the provinces were allotted for their annual expenditure only those sums which the Government of India thought fit, or which it could be persuaded to grant. This resulted in the distribution of the public income taking the form of a scramble in which the advantage went to the most aggressive or persistent of the provincial administrations, without much reference to their real needs. But in 1870 Mayo took the first steps towards financial decentralization in India. The administration of departments such as education, police and medical were transferred to the provincial governments, which were given a fixed annual grant for this purpose, and the provincial authorities were allowed to impose certain local taxes. This limited measure of decentralization, with various adjustments from time to time, proved successful; and Mayo's system remained in force until the introduction of dyarchy with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1921.<sup>3</sup> By enforcing rigid economy and by reluctantly imposing some

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Vol. II. p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Native States of India*, Lee-Warner, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> See *Moral and Material Progress*, 1930-31, pp. 357, 358.

additional taxation,<sup>1</sup> Mayo succeeded in turning the annual deficit into a surplus.

The Viceroy also obtained recognition of the principle, for which his predecessor had fought so hard, that unproductive works should be undertaken by loans.

The earliest policy as regards railways had been to encourage private enterprise guaranteed, and to some extent controlled, by government. In 1868 about 1800 miles of line had been constructed. Mayo began State ownership of railways and introduced the standard Indian gauge of 5 feet 6 inches on trunk lines and the metre gauge for subsidiary lines. Government and private ownership have existed in India side by side from this date; and in 1931 the total railway mileage was 42,281.<sup>2</sup>

On 8th February 1872, when on a tour to the penal settlement at the Andaman Islands, Mayo was murdered by a Pathan convict. Lord Northbrook, who was sent out to succeed him, belonged to the great banking house of Baring. His family had a long official connexion with India and his father had been born in Calcutta. Northbrook himself had been Under-Secretary under Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax) at the India Office, where his influence had made a strong impression.<sup>3</sup>

The principles of government in India were summed up by Northbrook in the following terms: "Our dealings with the native princes must be strictly governed by the treaties and agreements which we have made with them; we must show our sympathy with the nobler and educated classes and associate with them as much as we can in the government of their country; we must cherish and reward our native soldiers and officers; we must rule the people with patience, remembering how far they are removed from ourselves in education; and we must be cautious and deliberate in the introduction

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Hunter, Vol. II. pp. 90, 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Hunter, Vol. II pp. 277-290, and *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> *Earl of Northbrook*, Sir B. Mallet, p. 57.

of changes in their institutions and habits. Above all we must keep India at peace." <sup>1</sup>

These words sound like a succession of platitudes only when the history of India through the centuries which had gone before is ignored.

Finance, as might have been expected, was the strong feature of Northbrook's administration. But his Viceroyalty marks an important stage in the evolution of British government in India. The use of the telegraph cable, a new institution in 1872, inevitably increased the amount of control which the home authorities could exercise, added to which were the democratic tendency of the times and the growing interest shown by Parliament in all executive matters.<sup>2</sup> A new relationship consequently sprang up between the Government of India and the India Office, which was emphasized by the friction between the strong personalities of Lord Northbrook in India and Lord Salisbury in London.

Only one event of importance took place in British India during Northbrook's administration. At the end of October 1873 the reports which reached the Viceroy on the crops in Bihar and part of Bengal foreshadowed another great calamity. Relief measures were promptly taken, with the energetic support of the Bengal provincial government; and in 1874 "for the first time in Indian history a great failure of crops such as hitherto had produced famine was met in such a way as to save the lives of the public."

The case of Baroda, with which Northbrook had to deal, is an important landmark in the relationship between the supreme government and the Indian States.<sup>3</sup>

Baroda was, of course, much in the same position as other leading Indian States with reference to the paramount power. Its government, which had previously been none too good, rapidly became worse when Malhar Rao succeeded in 1870.

<sup>1</sup> *Earl of Northbrook*, Sir B. Mallet, pp. 134, 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 114 quoting Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer).

<sup>3</sup> For a statement of British policy see *Indian States Committee Report*, pp. 16, 17.

Three years later the Government of India was obliged to appoint a commission of inquiry. On its report the Gaekwar was warned that if certain reforms were not carried out he would be relieved of his authority.

But before the end of the probationary period an attempt to poison the Resident Colonel Phayre was reported and the Gaekwar was suspected of complicity. This added the more serious charge of disloyalty to a charge of misrule. The Gaekwar was put on his trial in 1875 by a commission of the chief justice of Bengal, three British high commissioners and three Indians, the Maharajas of Gwalior (Sindia) and Jaipur and Sir Dinkar Rao, minister of Gwalior. The commissioners were not unanimous. The Government of India consequently dropped the charge of disloyalty, but deposed Malhar Rao from the sovereignty of Baroda on the grounds of notorious misconduct, gross misgovernment and evident incapacity to carry into effect the necessary reforms. Malhar Rao's issue were barred from the succession by proclamation in April 1875, but the widow of Khande Rao, his predecessor, was permitted to adopt a son selected by the British Government from the Gaekwar family.

A large staff of British officials administered Baroda during the long minority of the young prince; and when the new Gaekwar was entrusted with full powers and privileges no new treaty or conditions were necessary.<sup>1</sup> Since then Baroda has been admirably administered by its rulers, who has been sixty years on the *gadi*.

Northbrook had not been long in India before he decided that what he described as an "uneasy and dissatisfied feeling" might be due to "increased taxation and certain improvements in the laws, etc., which have perhaps been pushed forward a little too fast."<sup>2</sup>

Income-tax more equitably adjusts the incidence of taxation between the rich and poor, and alone could reach the Indian and European trading classes and the wealthy landlords; and this led Wilson to advise and Mayo to impose this form of taxation. But Northbrook, after careful consideration, decided not to renew it.

<sup>1</sup> *Native States of India*, pp. 168-171, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Mallet, *op. cit.*, p. 65.



He had already, in 1873, vetoed the Bengal Municipal Bill, which would have increased local taxation, and so gave financial relief which, in the words of a leading Indian newspaper, had "a most soothing effect on the popular mind." For Northbrook's policy was to ease financial pressure by strict economy, particularly in the military department and by inaugurating in the public works a system of cheap irrigation based on local requirements and knowledge. His budgets, however, all showed a deficit.<sup>1</sup>

In the tariff controversy which took place during Northbrook's administration the Viceroy, in the words of his biographer, was the champion of India as against British prepossessions and interests.<sup>2</sup>

*Tariff Policy.* In 1874 a duty of 5 per cent. existed on Manchester cotton piece-goods. The manufacturers strongly pressed Disraeli (afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield) to remit this, on the grounds that the Indian cotton mills, whose output was now greatly increasing, used duty-free raw Egyptian and American cotton, and so could compete unfairly with higher-grade English goods. Previous to this the Indian mills had only manufactured coarse goods from Indian cotton.<sup>3</sup> Northbrook, backed by his tariff commission, decided that the then firmly held principles of free trade were not violated by a duty levied for revenue purposes only, and that the Government of India could not possibly forgo a duty which brought in £800,000 a year. In August 1875 the Viceroy passed a Tariff Bill in the Legislative Council abolishing all export duties with the exception of those on rice, indigo and shellac, and reducing the general scale of import duties from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 per cent. A concession was made to Manchester cotton goods by imposing an import duty on raw cotton coming to India from foreign countries.

The India Office was distinctly taken aback by the news of a tariff change of which they knew nothing, and Salisbury cabled his strong disapproval on the grounds of the right of the Secretary of

<sup>1</sup> *Earl of Northbrook*, Mallet, pp. 65-73. *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 373, taken from *Parliamentary Statistical Abstracts*.

<sup>2</sup> Mallet, *ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, p. 236.

State to be consulted about proposed legislation.<sup>1</sup> Nothing came of the vigorous exchange of dispatches which followed and the controversy died away with the visit of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII, and the announcement of Northbrook's resignation.

The Central Asiatic question began when the British crossed the Indus and the Russians reached the Oxus. By *Afghanistan*. Northbrook's time the problem had resolved itself into the relationship of these two empires with Afghanistan. British interests required a barrier between India and Russia, whose policy for many years to come was to "keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia."<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan was the only independent State left on the Russian line of advance, and it was therefore peculiarly unfortunate that British diplomacy should have alienated the Amir.

Shere Ali had been disappointed by Mayo's award in the Afghan-Persian boundary commission. He misinterpreted Northbrook's subsequent proceedings as attempts to weaken his power and to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. He was, moreover, irritated by the Viceroy's refusal to recognize his younger son, Abdullah Jan, as heir to the throne.

The critical phase in the Amir's relations with the British was reached in 1873, when Shere Ali sent his envoy to India. The Amir decided that he must either obtain definite and practical British protection or he would have to accept the unsolicited patronage of Russia. Northbrook cabled to England his recommendations to help the Amir with money, arms and, if necessary, troops to repel an unprovoked invasion. But the Liberal Government refused its sanction to the agreement, a decision which involved very serious consequences. Shere Ali turned to Russia, and while there was no accredited British representative in Afghanistan, a succession of Russian agents found their way to Kabul.

<sup>1</sup> The tariff controversy as seen from different standpoints can be read in Mallet, *op cit.*, pp. 107-112; *Trade Relations*, pp. 236-245; and *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., pp. 402-409.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. I. pp. 297-298.

At this point Disraeli came into power, and Salisbury, now Secretary of State for India, being thoroughly dissatisfied with the position, urged the Viceroy in 1875 to establish a British agency at Herat, and possibly at Kandahar.<sup>1</sup>

Northbrook was fully aware of the value of a British representative in Afghanistan, but he considered that Sher Ali was so much opposed to allowing British officers in his country that to force agents upon him would "subject us to the risk of another unnecessary and costly war in Afghanistan before many years are over."<sup>2</sup>

In September 1875 Northbrook asked to be allowed to resign in the following spring "for domestic reasons."<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister appointed Lord Lytton, then British Minister at Lisbon, and chiefly known as a man of letters under the name of Owen Meredith, to succeed him.

The new Viceroy took office in April 1876 with what may be described as sealed orders defining the policy to be followed in Afghanistan, but his instructions gave him considerable freedom of action. As the Amir's attitude was still uncertain, he was to be asked to receive a British Mission. If he refused the situation would at least be clear. If he accepted the Viceroy was empowered to promise help in case of an unprovoked attack upon Afghanistan and to grant what amounted to the requests which had been denied to the Amir three years earlier. In 1873 this might have made Shere Ali a firm and friendly ally, but now it was too late.

From April until October a correspondence which led nowhere passed between Simla and Kabul. But in December 1876, thanks to the remarkable local influence of Major (Sir Robert) Sandeman, a treaty was signed with the Khan of Kalat and chiefs of the Baluchistan clans which substantially strengthened the British situation on the frontier. Quetta was occupied, the Bolan Pass secured and a strategic position was gained on the road to Kandahar.

In January 1877 an Afghan mission to India continued the indefinite negotiations for three months. But it was now obvious

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, Lady Betty Balfour, pp. 5-24.

<sup>2</sup> Dispatch of 30th September 1875, Mallet, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

that British influence was extinct in Kabul, and after March communications with the Amir came to an end.

A month later war broke out between Russia and Turkey. In January 1878 a Russian army was before Constantinople, and Disraeli's ministry, faced with the prospect of war with Russia, made the imperial gesture of garrisoning Malta with Indian troops. Russia's reply was to move troops towards Afghanistan and to send General Stoletoff on a mission to Kabul, the policy of weakening British protection of Constantinople by stabbing at India.<sup>1</sup> The mission left Tashkend on 13th June (the date on which the Berlin Congress held its first sitting), and was received by Shere Ali, with considerable hesitation, on 22nd July.<sup>2</sup>

Lytton, with the consent of the home authorities, then made his final effort, and requested the Amir to receive a British Mission, the letter reaching Kabul in August on the day of Abdullah Jan's death. The Government of India, relying entirely on moral influence, sent Sir Neville Chamberlain with only a small escort, and the mission was curtly refused passage through the Khyber Pass in September.

The Amir ignored the ultimatum then sent to him, and war was declared with Afghanistan on 21st November 1878. *Second Afghan War.* General (Sir Sam) Browne advanced through the Khyber, General (Lord) Roberts up the Kurram and General Biddulph from Quetta. After Roberts' victory at the Peiwar Kotal, Shere Ali fled to Russian territory.

In May 1879 the treaty of Gandamak was signed with Yakub Khan, the new Amir, by which Afghan foreign affairs were to come under British control, the passes occupied, and a British envoy accepted by Afghanistan. Sir Louis Cavagnari was appointed, and on the representation of Yakub Khan, the Viceroy, against his own inclinations, sanctioned his residence at Kabul.

On 3rd September 1879, within six weeks of his arrival, Cavagnari

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. I p. 143

<sup>2</sup> *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 247, 248. For details of the treaty by which Shere Ali gave Russia control of the foreign policy of Afghanistan and free and exclusive commercial access to the country, see *ibid*, p. 370.

and his escort of seventy-five Guides cavalry and infantry were murdered by Afghan troops. The Amir made no effort to save the British mission but the subsequent Kabul commission exonerated him of complicity. Stewart at once reoccupied Kandahar, and on the 8th October, Roberts, advancing by the Kurram, appeared before Kabul. Yakub Khan, by this time a refugee in the British camp, abdicated at the end of the month and Roberts took over military control of the country. The deportation of the ex-Amir to India was the signal for a religious rising and Roberts had to fight hard at Sherpur in December before the country subsided into the dangerous tranquillity of a volcano.

At the best of times Afghanistan is a peculiarly unstable kingdom. Its people, many of them nomads, are grouped in a number of tribal republics, whose allegiance to the Amir is often hardly more than nominal. But it was impossible for the Government of India to prolong the military occupation indefinitely, and Lytton could not in the circumstances restore Yakub Khan. He decided, with the sanction of the Conservative ministry, to divide up the country. He proclaimed that the British would recognize a friendly ruler at Kabul chosen by the people themselves; and he made Wali Shere Ali Khan ruler of Kandahar, supported him with troops and established a strong advanced frontier post at Pishin.

This was the situation when Abdur Rahman Durrani, a nephew of Shere Ali, emerged from his retirement at Samarkand and with a hundred followers and two thousand pounds borrowed from the Russian Governor-General rode south to win the throne of Afghanistan. He at once got in touch with the British authorities and was negotiating for his recognition as Amir when, on 26th April 1880, the Conservative government went out and Gladstone became Prime Minister. The Liberals had violently attacked Lytton over Afghanistan and the Viceroy resigned, to be replaced by the Marquess of Ripon.<sup>1</sup>

Ripon went out pledged and eager to reverse his predecessors'

<sup>1</sup> For details of the events in Afghanistan see *Lord Lytton's Administration*, the *Official Account of the Second Afghan War*, and the descriptive narrative given by Earl Roberts in *Forty-one Years in India*.

policy. But circumstances were too strong for him. In June 1880 Shere Ali's younger son Ayub Khan, who had kept his hold on Herat, set out towards Kandahar. On 27th July he completely routed a brigade under General Burrows at Maiwand, and invested Kandahar. Roberts marched from Kabul, covering the 313 miles between 11th and 31st August and relieved Kandahar after a hard and well-fought engagement in which Ayub Khan was completely defeated.

Shere Ali Khan resigned in November, leaving Kandahar without a ruler, and Ripon recognized Abdur Rahman as Amir of Afghanistan. Although he abandoned Lytton's demand for a British envoy Ripon's policy was otherwise in accordance with the aims of his predecessor. He secured control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan and he retained Pishin. Ripon's own party were furious and the immediate abandonment of Pishin was announced in the Queen's Speech in 1881. But the Viceroy saw clearly that these means of controlling the Amir were essential to avoid another Afghan war later on; and he let it be known that he would resign rather than withdraw from Pishin. Gladstone accordingly let the matter drop. It took Abdur Rahman eighteen months to expel Ayub Khan and establish himself firmly upon the throne of Afghanistan.

With Afghanistan under the iron rule of an Amir friendly although aloof in his attitude towards the British Government, we can return to Lytton's administration in India.

By the proclamation to the Imperial Assembly at Delhi on 1st January 1877, when Queen Victoria was declared *Kaisar-i-Hind*, Empress of India, the Crown became formally identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sympathies and interests of a powerful native aristocracy. In the words of Holkar: "India has been till now a vast heap of stones, some of them big, some of them small. Now the house is built and from roof to basement each stone of it is in its right place."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Lord Lytton to Queen Victoria (23rd December 1876 to 10th January 1877), Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

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The most serious domestic event with which Lytton had to deal was famine in the southern provinces of India. The failure of the monsoon in 1876 affected an area of about 200,000 square miles with a population of thirty-six millions and was most severely felt in parts of the Madras Presidency, Mysore, the southern half of Hyderabad and the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency.

Sir Philip Wodehouse, Governor of Bombay, promptly organized large public works. The Madras government misjudged the situation and made hopelessly inadequate arrangements which the Viceroy was obliged to remedy by a personal visit to Madras. The famine lasted until 1878, spreading northwards in the second year, and the mortality due to famine alone in one year in British India was estimated at over five million. The foresight of the Bombay government kept the relief expenditure down to four million pounds in that Presidency, as against ten millions in Madras, where a million acres went for a time out of cultivation.<sup>1</sup>

The policy put forward by Lytton for famine relief is the backbone of the existing system. He saw that there were only two effective means of fighting it and mitigating its effects. These were railways and irrigation works; the third method—emigration—not being feasible.<sup>2</sup> As a first practical measure he started the famine insurance grant, by which an annual allocation is made from general revenues, and this fund is available for famine relief, protective works, and for the relief of debt.

Protection was then looked upon as an exploded theory, and Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, gave his opinion that "it is difficult to overstate the evil of permitting an industry so large as the cotton manufacture of India

<sup>1</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, 2nd Edn., pp. 427, 496. Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228. For emigration difficulties see *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 47-60, where Indian Government action, to remove disabilities met with by Indians within the British Empire, is described. In 1931, including 800,000 in Ceylon, there were 2,305,000 Indians overseas in the British Empire, and about 100,000 permanently settled in foreign countries.

is likely to become to grow up under the influence of a system which a wide experience has proved to be unsound."<sup>1</sup> It was, moreover, strongly held in England that the duty of 5 per cent. levied in India on imported goods was a serious hindrance to the trade of Manchester, and that any form of protection was against the interests of the consumer.

Lytton, an ardent free trader, wished to see all import duties swept away, and having "convinced himself that the essential interests of India required the measure,"<sup>2</sup> he brought forward a Bill in 1879 exempting coarse cotton goods from customs duty. Only two members of his council supported him. The majority urged the existing budget deficit, and reflected the objections of the Indian merchants and the chambers of commerce of Madras and Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> But Lytton, exercising his powers under the Act of 1870, overruled the majority of his council. In the course of the discussion of the cotton duties the Secretary of State refused to admit the claim made by the Government of India that measures affecting the customs tariff should be left entirely to them. Salisbury insisted that the consent of the home Government had to be obtained before important changes were made.<sup>4</sup>

The tariff policy for the next fifty years was an adjustment between the principles of free trade, the representations of the Lancashire cotton industry, and the necessity of raising revenue in India. In 1882, with a good budget, Ripon abolished the remaining import duties, except those on salt and liquors. In 1894, when the Government of India was faced with a deficit of two million pounds, import duties were reimposed. The tariff consisted of a general *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent., to which there were certain exceptions. By Indian legislation in 1896 an import rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on cotton goods was counterbalanced by a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. excise on cotton goods made in the Indian mills; a special measure in the interests of Lancashire. All that can be said for this excise duty is that it gave

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, pp. 479-480.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 482.

<sup>3</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, pp. 412-415.

<sup>4</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, pp. 227, 228.



to the hand-loom weavers (who were exempt from it) the same measure of protection, as against the Indian mill-owners, which the British manufacturers enjoyed.<sup>1</sup>

This measure, as the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill pointed out in 1919, created the belief that India's fiscal policy was dictated from Whitehall in the interests of England, and that the sooner this idea was eradicated the better for the good relations between both countries. Theoretically the excise duty was within the strictest tenets of free trade. It raised the necessary revenue whilst keeping the import duty on imported cloth at a low level, and so mitigated the rise in its retail price. But when the suggestion had been made, in 1876, that the removal of the cotton import duties might make it necessary to impose an excise duty upon Indian cottons, Salisbury observed in his dispatch: "I can hardly conceive a course more injurious to a young and rising industry in the natural growth of which India has the deepest interest."<sup>2</sup>

In 1916, under the stress of war, the general tariff of 5 per cent. was doubled; and an additional 1 per cent. was levied in the depression which came later. The reforms of 1919 brought a new influence into play which will be referred to later, but it may be mentioned here that the excise duty imposed on cotton in 1896 was abolished in 1926.

A feature of Lytton's administration which without doubt or controversy benefited the consumer was his action in regard to the salt tax. Reference to this tax, which is as long established as any in India, has already been made; and although Akbar made an unsuccessful attempt to abolish it, salt has remained an inevitable source of revenue to every government in succession. Before the days of British rule transit dues, added to the local cesses, were liable to raise the price of salt in inland districts to an exorbitant figure.

The government monopoly established by Warren Hastings was attacked in 1845 on the grounds that the tax was high and the salt neither good nor cheap. The monopoly was consequently relaxed, to disappear altogether in 1862 and be replaced by excise; but the

<sup>1</sup> *Trade Relations between England and India*, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

government continued, and still continues, to make salt. The inferior Indian product was gradually superseded by imported white salt in Bengal, where salt cannot be made locally, as in Madras and Bombay. The inland customs houses had been abolished in 1834, and a customs barrier set up round British Indian territory inside which the manufacture of salt was prohibited.

In his budget speech in March 1877, Sir John Strachey described this customs barrier, which stretched for 2472 miles and was guarded by 13,000 men<sup>1</sup>: "Along the greater part of this enormous system of inland customs lines . . . a physical barrier has been created comparable to nothing that I can think of except the Great Wall of China. It consists principally of an impenetrable hedge of thorny trees and bushes, supplemented by stone walls and ditches across which no human being or beast of burden can pass without being subjected to detention and search . . . Owing to the levy of the export duty on sugar, the same obstructions are offered to the traffic passing in the other direction."<sup>2</sup>

Another point about the salt duties was their inequality, the amounts levied varying considerably in different parts of the country. By giving compensation to manufacturers whose salt works were suppressed, and by treaty with the Indian States, to whom annual payments equivalent to the duty were made, Lytton equalized the salt duty throughout India, and the "hedge" was removed. At the same time the price of salt was greatly cheapened in Northern India by railway construction.<sup>3</sup> Since 1924 the tax upon salt has been fixed at a rate working out at about fourpence a head *per annum* throughout British India. Of the salt now consumed in the country about 35 per cent. is manufactured by or for government, and the rest is either privately manufactured or imported.

Lytton extended Mayo's scheme of decentralization, and further developed the system of provincial assignments. In his last year of office he gave a new impulse to the employment of Indians in government service.

*Administrative  
Reforms*

<sup>1</sup> *Modern India*, 2nd Imp., p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 465.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 469-470.

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Indians had found great difficulty in taking advantage of the Charter Act of 1833 and the rules as first applied in 1853 of open competition for the coveted civil service. The expense of the journey to England prevented many good scholars from going to London to sit for the examination. In 1878 only nine Indians held posts in the coveted civil service of their own country. Lord Lawrence's scholarship scheme, favoured by the Conservative government, had been dropped by the succeeding Liberal ministry, in which the Duke of Argyll, as Secretary of State, held the opinion that Indians could be best employed in judicial posts, and their selection made in India without competitive examinations.<sup>1</sup>

All parties were agreed that the pledge first made in 1833 must be kept, but to honour it effectively in the observance more favourable conditions were necessary. In 1878 Lytton put forward a scheme which, in collaboration with the Secretary of State, was put into force in 1879. A maximum of one-fifth of the total number of civilians appointed by the Secretary of State in any one year to the coveted civil service were to be Indian probationers selected by the local governments and approved by the Governor-General in council. At the end of two years, after passing the necessary tests, these probationers would enter the new class of statutory civilians, on two-thirds the salary payable to English civil servants of corresponding rank. In addition to this several branches of the uncovenanted service were reserved exclusively for Indians. These rules did not, of course, prevent Indian candidates from competing, as before, at the examinations held in London. No legislation was needed to carry out these reforms, which were continued by Lord Dufferin, who instituted a provincial service for the statutory civilian system.<sup>2</sup> The policy of reducing the proportion of Europeans in the administration was pursued, and in 1904 Lord Curzon pointed out that he ruled over 230 millions of people under 6500 Europeans were employed and 21,800 of the inhabitants of India itself. In the posts requiring pay of over £800 a year, 1263 were Europeans, 92 were Indians

<sup>1</sup> *India Under Victoria*, Trotter, Vol. II. pp. 391, 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Lord Lytton's Administration*, pp. 524-534.

and 15 were Anglo-Indians.<sup>1</sup> The definite "Indianization" of the services was still to come, but it is interesting to compare this proportion with the purely Indian personnel in the public service under Akbar.<sup>2</sup>

The differences between the civil service in England and in India need some explanation. In England government officials are collected in large offices aloof from the general public. Their work is specialized and seldom technical. But although there are big secretariats in India the total number of officials employed in them is relatively small. The civil servants are mainly distributed over the face of the country to do their work as individuals. The Statutory Commission report describes their varied duties: "Lecturing in universities or bridging rivers, fighting epidemic disease or dealing with widespread riots, excavating a prehistoric city or installing a water supply for a new one."

From the servants of the East India Company, whose earliest official duties amounted to little more than those of a revenue-collecting agency, the district officer was evolved. On him the whole system of administration in practice depends. In the eyes of the people in his charge he is the Government of India, "at once autocrat, counsellor and friend." Lord Curzon, speaking of the British officials who died at their posts at Jubbulpore and at Nagpur during the famine of 1896, touched upon an aspect of British rule in India which is too often forgotten: "These men did not die on the battle-field. No decoration shone upon their breasts, no fanfare proclaimed their departure. They simply and silently laid down their lives, broken to pieces in the service of the poor and the suffering among the Indian people; and not in this world, but in another, will they have their reward."<sup>3</sup>

In 1857, when the vernacular press had little influence, a short-lived Act was passed directed principally against the papers published in English. But by 1875 the vernacular newspapers were printing articles which the Secretary of State described as "not only calculated to bring the

*The Vernacular Press Act.*

<sup>1</sup> *Modern India*, 2nd Imp., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II. p. 81.

Government into contempt, but which palliate, if they do not absolutely justify as a duty, the assassination of British officers.”<sup>1</sup>

The Second Afghan War gave rise to very outspoken criticisms of the Government by vernacular newspapers, in Bengal especially, and this definitely marked the beginning of political discontent in India. Supported by the opinion of all the local governments (except Madras, where the Indian press was negligible) and with the sanction of the Secretary of State, the central government introduced and passed the Vernacular Press Act on 14th March 1878. The Act was preventive rather than punitive, and amounted to the provision of guarantees by publishers and printers. But the council of India were not unanimously in favour of the measure, there were debates in the House of Commons,<sup>2</sup> and in 1882 the Act was repealed. It had not, in point of fact, ever been fully enforced.

Before dealing with the events of Ripon's Viceroyalty, reference must be made to the renaissance of Muhammadan education. This was due to the exertions of one man, Sir Syed Ahmad and Aligarh College. For what Raja Ram Mohun Roy had done for the moral and intellectual rejuvenation of the Hindus Sir Syed Ahmad Khan accomplished for the Moslems. “There would be no educated Muhammadan community existing and flourishing today but for the heroic pioneer efforts and far-sighted vision of this great man, who did not see in the utter collapse of the Mogul empire an argument for racial estrangement and enmity.”<sup>3</sup> The Syed had shown conspicuous courage and loyalty to the British Government in 1857, and while he was not favourably inclined towards the Indian National Congress, he saw clearly enough the need for harmonious co-operation between Hindus and Moslems.

Syed Ahmad came back from a visit to England convinced of the supreme importance of progressive education as a civilizing influence, and began the efforts which led to the establishment of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury to the Government of India, *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 502-523.

<sup>3</sup> *India's Nation Builders*, N. D. Bannerjee (1919), p. 95.

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the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, with the object of combining Islamic culture with the education necessary for success under modern conditions. Primarily for Moslems the college is, however, open to students of other religions, and the first graduate was a Hindu.<sup>1</sup> The foundation stone was laid by Lytton in January 1877<sup>2</sup> and it has proved a successful and vigorous institution. It became a university in 1920, and in 1931 there were 1914 students in the university proper and its dependent institutions.

Except for the concluding stages of the Afghan War, and a Mahsud expedition in 1881 when some valuable survey work  
*Mysore* was done, Ripon's term of office was a period of peace. The only political event of importance was the rendition of Mysore

Lord Wellesley had recreated the Hindu State in 1799, but the condition of good government had not been kept by its rulers. In 1831 the country was placed under direct British administration, when the foundations of its present prosperity as an admirably ruled state were laid. After the death of the deposed Maharaja in 1868 the Government of India recognized his adopted son as his successor. The heir to Mysore was carefully educated, and the State, with good laws, competent law courts and a sound system of revenue settlement was handed over by Ripon in 1881.<sup>3</sup>

Mayo's decentralization scheme of 1870 had greatly increased the number of urban municipal bodies although very  
*Local Self-Government* little was accomplished in the rural districts. In 1882 Ripon passed a series of Acts giving municipal and districts boards a high proportion of elected members.<sup>4</sup> But general apathy and the innate disinclination of the elected members to take responsibility combined to disappoint the expectations of

<sup>1</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, p. 468.

<sup>2</sup> *India's Nation Builders*, pp. 111, 112.

<sup>3</sup> For the deed of transfer, which fully describes the general position of the States, and of Mysore in particular, to the paramount power, see *The Native States of India*, pp. 174-179.

<sup>4</sup> For the resolution which gives Ripon's policy, see *Report of Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. I. pp. 299-300.

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Government except in a few large cities. The extension of local self-government did not "very soon manifest itself . . . as the instrument of political and popular education" which, in the words of the resolution, Ripon had hoped. Even in many of the towns the municipality continued to confine its activities to approving the decisions of the official chairman, and in the districts, with few exceptions, local self-government continued to be, as in the past, one of the many functions of the district officer. This state of affairs was recognized by the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report in 1918.<sup>1</sup>

The first Indian census was taken in 1881, and since that date this has been repeated every ten years. While the statistics showing the birth and death rates and the relation between them are of the first importance, a comprehensive survey is included, together with every custom and activity of the people and every conceivable matter concerning them, from the rainfall to the age of marriage.

After 1870 successful Indian candidates began to appear as members of the civil service. They were mostly appointed to the judicial branch, and by 1883 some were senior enough to be shortly eligible for appointment as district and sessions judges. But by the existing law no Indian-born judge or magistrate, except within the Presidency towns, could hear charges against European residents. Consequently, unless the law were amended Indian-born judges would have less power than European members of the same service. Courtenay Ilbert, then law member of the Governor-General's council, accordingly introduced a Bill to abolish "every judicial disqualification based merely on race distinctions."<sup>2</sup>

The Bill aroused the strongest opposition amongst Europeans in out-stations, such as the indigo-planters and managers of tea-gardens, who were afraid of unfair decisions. Their cause was taken up by the European residents of Calcutta; and it was strongly supported in England, where public meetings of protest were held

<sup>1</sup> See also *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> *Political India*, p. 37.

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in St. James Hall and in Limehouse. At the same time a counter-agitation began among educated Indians, who resented these demonstrations as an undeserved slur upon their judicial probity. *The Times* pointed out<sup>1</sup> that the introduction of the Criminal Jurisdiction Bill had caused widespread agitation and excitement, had evoked antipathies of race, and produced a vast amount of reciprocal irritation; and asked whether it were desirable to do so much evil that so small a good might accrue. The Government of India withdrew the Bill and substituted an amendment of the Code, which reserved to European alleged offenders the right to claim trial by jury.

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*India in the Victorian Age*, Romesh C. Dutt, 2nd Edn. 1906, a work which has had a wide circulation, especially in India. It contains many statistics and is carefully documented, but the author makes certain challenging assertions which are not borne out by historical fact, and the book must be read with caution.

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<sup>1</sup> Leading article, 26th June 1883



## India Under the Crown

### II

#### FROM DUFFERIN TO CURZON

THE appointment of a Catholic Viceroy, Ripon being a convert to the Church of Rome, had raised a storm of disapproval in English Protestant circles. He left India amidst enthusiastic demonstrations of the affection of the Indian people and Lord Dufferin, who became Viceroy in December 1884, confessed later to Ripon that this "made the position a little difficult for your successor." But Dufferin, who was deeply impressed by his courage, conscientiousness and ability made it clear from the first that there was to be no change of policy.<sup>1</sup>

The new Viceroy had excellent judgement and a remarkably firm will, and his infinite tact enabled him to carry his point with the minimum of friction. He had held appointments in the Liberal Government, including the post of Under-Secretary of State for India, and he had represented his country abroad as commissioner in Syria and in Egypt, as ambassador at St. Petersburg and Constantinople, and Governor-General of Canada.

His first business was to pass the Bengal Tenancy Bill, which had been taken in hand by Ripon. The landlords *Land Acts.* opposed legislation affecting rents and fixity of tenure as an infringement of the permanent settlement. Actually it was a continuation of Cornwallis's policy, and the Bill, an improvement on the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859, became law in 1885.

Dufferin saw that in Oudh the position of the tenants was much the same as upon large estates in Ireland where he was a landed proprietor. The evils of great insecurity and incessant competition had to be guarded against, and the Viceroy succeeded in overcoming the natural reluctance of the taluqdars to an amendment of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Sir A. Lyall, Vol II pp 75, 76

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law of 1868 in favour of the tenants. The Oudh Rent Act of 1886 enabled the 1,800,000 tenants-at-will to improve their holdings, entitled them on eviction to compensation for improvements, and provided a seven years' tenure.

In 1887 a Punjab Tenancy Act was passed. The Punjab is mostly a land of small landowners and peasant proprietors, and the Act regulated the relations between these owners and their tenants as regards rent and compensation for improvements.

Land legislation is never an easy matter, and it is exceptionally difficult in India. But, with the co-operation of able and experienced local officers Dufferin's policy may fairly be said to have materially benefited agriculture in Bengal, in Oudh and in the Punjab.<sup>1</sup>

Affairs in Afghanistan and the annexation of Upper Burma are the chief events of Dufferin's Viceroyalty, but before dealing with these a word should be said on domestic matters. Finance was made difficult by the fall in the price of silver, a serious economic event to which India is particularly vulnerable. In 1886 a legislative council similar to those in Madras, Bengal and Bombay was established in what were then the North-West Provinces. The Muhammadan pilgrim traffic was put on a satisfactory basis. A civil service commission was held, and on its report Dufferin threw open to Indian candidates three hundred of the higher posts previously reserved for the covenanted service.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1885 the Indian National Congress held its first meeting of Hindu, Muhammadan and Parsi delegates at Bombay. Controversy over such measures as the Vernacular Press Act and the Ilbert Bill had much to do with its birth, but the idea of concerted All-Indian action for social and political reform had been advocated by Alan O. Hume of the Bengal Civil Service and by other Englishmen, and to Dufferin was due in some measure its character as a political body.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Sir A. Lyall, Vol. II. pp. 76-84.

<sup>2</sup> *History of India*, L. J. Trotter, revised to 1911 by W. H. Hutton (1917).

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Although since 1860 interest in politics had been growing this was the visible beginning of political life in India from the side of Indians themselves. Its aim was to remodel the Indian administration on Western parliamentary lines. These early sessions were far from hostile to British rule; and their ideals, as W. C. Bonnerjee stated in the first presidential address, were in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. From the first the distinguished Parsi political reformer and Member of Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji, was associated with Congress; and, until the organization was finally captured by the left wing, Surendranath Bannerjee enthusiastically inspired through it the growth of Indian nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

In 1884 the Russian advance in Central Asia had reached Merv, a threat to Afghanistan and an ultimate menace to India which could only be met by diplomatic means. Ripon had suggested an Anglo-Russian boundary commission under Foreign Office arrangements to set a limit on Russian expansion, and when Dufferin came to India the commission was at work. But the general feeling in England, although described in some quarters as "Mervousness," was one of not unreasonable alarm and, in March 1885, the Government of India was instructed to mobilize an army corps to move on Herat should Russia attack that Afghan fortress and make war inevitable.

At this juncture the Viceroy invited the Amir to meet him at Rawalpindi, and Abdur Rahman entered India on the same day of March 1885 on which his troops were attacked by the Russians at the disputed frontier post of Panjdeh. The informal hostility of the incident was not looked upon by the Amir with the feelings which it excited in England, where frontiers are regarded in the light of international law as immune from border skirmishes. Abdur Rahman's chief concern was the exclusion at all hazards of British and Russian officers and troops from Afghanistan, a policy to which he resolutely held for the whole twenty years of his subsequent reign. He asked from the British Government no more than money

<sup>1</sup> *Political India*, pp. 39-46.

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and arms. These Dufferin willingly promised him and the Amir returned well satisfied to Kabul.<sup>1</sup> The Panjdeh incident was smoothed over, and the boundary commission satisfactorily delimited the Russo-Afghan frontier.

While affairs beyond the North-West Frontier were giving the Viceroy grave anxiety, serious trouble had arisen in the east. British imperial policy, following the practice of Rome, has been to see that bordering States have been so far protected, whether they wished it or not, as to prevent powerful neighbours from meddling with them. The prosecution of this policy has been one of the leading motives of wars, annexations and alliances.<sup>2</sup>

*Third Burmese War.*

Since 1879 the resentful attitude of the Burmese Government of Ava had necessitated the withdrawal of the British Resident from Mandalay. British commercial rights were being disregarded, and British subjects such as members of the Bombay and Burma Trading Company were being exposed to grave injustice and injury. This was the situation when, in February 1885, the Viceroy learnt that King Theebaw had made a treaty with the French Government under which special consular and commercial privileges were accorded to France.

With the sanction of the home authorities, Dufferin sent an ultimatum demanding a settlement of all matters under dispute, requiring Theebaw to receive a permanent British Resident at his court, and laying down the principle that the Burmese king must in future defer to British advice in regard to his foreign relations. At the same time about 10,000 troops were concentrated at Rangoon.

No satisfactory reply was received from Burma and war was declared in November 1885. Eighteen days later Theebaw surrendered and was deported to India. The country was formally annexed on 1st January 1886. Guerilla warfare, however, protracted hostilities for about five years and called for the employment of 30,000 troops before it ended. In 1897 Upper and Lower Burma were united into a single province under the Government of India.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, Lyall, Vol. II. pp. 85-109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 116

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Lord Dufferin left India in December 1888 leaving an unclouded sky behind him, and taking with him the remembrance of "universal kindness and goodwill which he had received in all parts of India and from every section of its inhabitants." He was succeeded by another ex-Under-Secretary for India and Governor-General of Canada, in the Marquis of Lansdowne, whose administration, except for several of the inevitable minor frontier expeditions, was one of profound peace.

The zone running southwards from the Hindu Kush to the Arabian Sea, known as the North-West Frontier, involves two problems—the international and the tribal. There is the possibility of invasion by a foreign power and the constant problem of the control of the border tribes.

The frontier may be divided into two parts, Baluchistan and the country to the north.

The only definite advance before Lansdowne's time had been to extend the British sphere of influence from the Sind border into the highlands of Baluchistan, and to occupy Quetta in 1876. Peace among unruly hill tribes like the Maris and the Bagtis was due to the wonderful personality of Sir Robert Sandeman, who dealt "with the hearts and minds of the people and not only with their fears." The earlier incessant raiding into British India had ended when Sandeman, as a young district officer, had won the confidence of the local chiefs and persuaded them to keep order themselves. Sandeman took advantage of the Baluchi oligarchic organization, and local and inter-tribal disputes were settled by the assemblies known as *jirgahs*, over which government officers presided; there were no revenue or criminal courts. His right-hand man for twenty years, until Sandeman's death in 1892, was Rai Bahadur Hittu Ram, C.I.E., who had started life in a government office on five rupees a month.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1889, at the request of the Zhob Valley chiefs and

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*, T. H. Thornton, 1895. *Sandeman in Baluchistan*, Hittu Ram (Lahore), 1907, gives a vivid account of Sandeman's work on the frontier.

with government sanction, Sandeman took over that district. Apozai, where the durbar took place, became Fort Sandeman, and this singularly remote military station, and Jacobabad in Sind with its Indian record-breaking temperature of 126 degrees in the shade, rather unfortunately commemorate two of the most famous names on this frontier.

The problem of the frontier from Waziristan northwards was not so easy to solve. The Amir claimed a shadowy superiority over the tribes up to the Indian frontier, and the Pathans were consequently able to play off the British official against the Afghan. To this was added the turbulent character of a people who hate authority, and whose young men have always been more inclined to listen to their fanatical Moslem priests than to the cautious advice of their chiefs and the older men amongst them. The semi-nomadic tribesmen in a country as hard and grim as themselves spend much of their time in fighting, raiding the plains, and carrying on family blood-feuds. Fine natural shots, of splendid physique for the most part, the Pathans rank among the finest fighting men in the world; and as private trading in arms has enabled them to keep abreast to an appreciable extent with modern improvements in rifles, only picked and highly-trained troops can hold their own with them on their native hills. Even today the tribes can find some reply to aeroplanes in infiltration tactics and movements by night.

To gain some measure of political control over the border tribes and so end a situation which was always liable to cause trouble, Dufferin sent Sir Mortimer Durand to Kabul, in 1893, to settle the spheres of influence of the two countries. In the course of the next few years the boundary commission demarcated the "Durand Line" from Chitral to the Zhob Valley.

Two years earlier the Hunza-Nagar expedition had resulted in the strengthening of a weak point in the line of the North-West Frontier. The little hill states of Hunza and Nagar, bordering on Russian Turkestan and China, acknowledged the suzerainty of Kashmir to the extent of an annual tribute amounting in all to a

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handful of gold-dust, a couple of horses and hounds, and two baskets of apricots. But in May 1891, Hunza, with Nagar as a reluctant ally, invaded the Kashmir frontier. A British force was sent into the country, the ruler of Hunza fled into China, and the two states have been consistently loyal to their obligations ever since.<sup>1</sup> But as regards the relationship between the Pathan tribes and the British Government the situation remained far from satisfactory.

After the Persian and Afghan invasions and conquest of the eighteenth century, no Indian government was concerned with the Pathan tribes until Ranjit Singh expelled the Afghans. Then for a quarter of a century a purely local situation arose in the collisions between the Sikhs and the trans-border tribes, but this in no way affected the rest of India. In 1849 the British annexed the Punjab kingdom, and the North-West Frontier became the concern of the Government of India, and this created an entirely new problem. The policy Dalhousie adopted is known as the close-border system. The tribes raided, kidnapped, and harboured outlaws until the patience of the British Government was exhausted, when a punitive expedition was sent against the offending tribe.

When contact was first made it might not have been impossible to "Sandemanize" the Pathans by using their tribal assemblies to settle disputes, by creating tribal police and so transferring responsibility for their own political, social and economic development to the people themselves under British supervision. But the only form of tribal responsibility attempted was the seizure of men and property of the tribe to which offenders belonged; and the criminal code enforced on Pathans under British administration was the criminal law of England, modified to some extent, but holding murder as a capital offence. The Pathan, with his universal blood-feuds, takes a lenient view of murder, and his tribal law aims at redress instead of punishment. The imposition of standards looked upon as imperative in western civilization on a people who have never understood them and who might otherwise have been controlled through their own tribal law and procedure, created the outlaw who escapes from British India over the border, and has been the direct

<sup>1</sup> *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, pp. 130-149

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or indirect cause of numerous expeditions in reprisal for border crime.

The close border system definitely ended with the demarcation of the Durand Line. Between 1893 and 1895 advanced posts were built on the Samana ridge above Kohat, and in the Gumal, the Tochi and the Kurram valleys, while garrisons were placed in the Malakand and in Chitral. In many cases tribes were paid large allowances for protecting the roads.

In 1891 there was serious trouble in the remote State of Manipur over the succession. The chief commissioner of Assam and others of his party who went to deal with this were murdered. The rebellion was suppressed by British troops, the leaders were tried and executed for murder, and measures were taken to ensure necessary reforms. The State was not annexed and the importance of the incident lies in the principles laid down in this case; namely:

*The Indian States.* The repudiation by the Government of India of the application of international law to the protected States; the assertion of the right to settle successions in case of rebellion against a chief; the doctrine that resistance to imperial orders constitutes rebellion; and the right of the paramount power to inflict capital punishment on those who had put to death its agents in the lawful discharge of their duty.<sup>1</sup>

The Government of India had also to intervene in Kalat, where the Khan began grossly to misgovern after Sandeman's death. The leading men in the State were consulted, and they recommended that the Khan should be deposed and his son made ruler. The Government of India agreed, and the succession was facilitated by the voluntary resignation of the reigning Khan in 1893.<sup>2</sup>

*Internal Affairs* In the last two years of Lansdowne's administration the earlier budget surpluses were changed into deficits, largely on account of the increasing burden of the home charges caused by the fall in the price of silver, and consequently

<sup>1</sup> *The Native States of India*, pp. 179-183.

<sup>2</sup> *Administration of Lord Lansdowne*, p. 51



in the exchange value of the rupee. The value of the rupee fluctuated between 1s. 6d. in 1890 and 1s. 2½d. in 1893.<sup>1</sup> This seriously affected trade and led to the formation of the Indian Currency Association which was joined by members of all classes. The international conference convened at Brussels in 1892 to consider the monetary question failed to agree, and the Government of India accordingly took its own measures. In 1893 the Indian mints were closed to the free coinage of silver; the value of the rupee in relation to gold was fixed at 1s. 4d.; and currency notes were issued in Calcutta and Bombay on this basis. Gold was not made legal tender.<sup>2</sup>

The peace of the country was broken for a time by communal disturbances. A laudable Hindu movement for the protection of cows from cruelty degenerated into a high-handed and illicit agitation to suppress the slaughter of kine for food or sacrificial purposes. Riots amounting to anarchy broke out in Bombay between Hindus and Moslems, and heavy casualties were caused by similar disturbances in Bengal and the North-West Provinces. The riots were suppressed by prompt and vigorous government action, a duty which the Viceroy emphasized was due to the whole community "to secure to both great religious denominations freedom from molestation or persecution in the exercise of their religious observances." On Lansdowne's suggestion the popular leaders in the disturbed districts formed conciliation committees to go into the question of custom as to the slaughter of kine and to take steps to prevent these outbreaks in future.<sup>3</sup>

A considerable advance, principally in the universities, was made in education during Lansdowne's Viceroyalty.

*Education.* Technical education was encouraged and agricultural classes were started in many of the high schools. In female education the number of girls rose from 214,000 to 270,000; thirteen women graduated as bachelors of arts and one took the degree of master. A large extension was made to Lady Dufferin's scheme for supplying

<sup>1</sup> *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 583.

<sup>2</sup> *Administration of Lord Lansdowne*, pp. 35-39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23.

medical aid education to the women of India through special hospitals and dispensaries.

The first Factory Act had been passed in 1881. Lansdowne passed a second Act which limited the hours of female labour to eleven in a day and secured to all factory hands a weekly holiday.<sup>1</sup> Among the Acts which have since been passed are the Mines Acts (1901 and 1923), the Workmen's Compensation Act (1923), the Trades Union Act (1926) and the Trades Disputes Act (1929). There were in 1929 more than 8000 factories in India employing over a million and a half hands, 257,000 being women. Labour conditions now include a sixty-hour week, no child labour under twelve years of age, or under thirteen in mines, and prohibition of night work for women and children. In unregulated workshops women and children are still employed in most unhealthy and sometimes disgusting processes.<sup>2</sup>

In passing an Act raising the age of consent from ten to twelve, against which its great supporter Byramji Malabari met with violent opposition, the Viceroy reiterated the principle that no civilized government can respect the customs and prejudices of any section of a community when these are inconsistent with humanity, morality and reason.<sup>3</sup> As the Aga Khan has said: "*Sati*, infant marriage, the compulsions of permanent widowhood and the enervating restrictions of the purdah, are so many hateful caricatures of the teaching of the Prophet, and indeed of the earliest and finest writings of Hinduism, namely, respect and honour for women by protecting the persons of the bearers of the race from risks of violence. These and other social evils have so handicapped India that it is impossible to conceive of her taking a proper place in the midst of free nations until the broad principle of equality between the sexes had been generally accepted by her people."<sup>4</sup>

The best mind and thought of the country has for many years

<sup>1</sup> *Administration of Lord Lansdowne*, p. 17

<sup>2</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 235-246

<sup>3</sup> *Administration of Lord Lansdowne*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *India in Transition* (1918), p. 256

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seen the need for improvement in the position of women; and the All-India Women's Conferences which have been held since 1926 have done much to promote the social as well as the educational welfare of the women of India.<sup>1</sup>

The India Councils Act of 1892 increased the number of members on the legislative councils and authorized discussion of the annual financial statement under certain restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

*Parliamentary Legislation.*

In 1893 the office of commander-in-chief in the Madras and Bombay armies was abolished by Act of Parliament. This enabled the Government of India to carry out a reorganization scheme with one commander-in-chief, a reform which four successive Viceroys had urged and which had been originally recommended by Lord William Bentinck in 1833.<sup>3</sup> The presidency system was abolished in 1894. The whole army in India was reorganized in four commands, with an additional line of defence in the Imperial Service troops raised by the States. But the commands remained separate.

*Army Reform.*

In 1894 Lord Lansdowne was succeeded by the Earl of Elgin, whose father had died in India as Viceroy in 1863. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Elgin had held no great offices, and he was called upon to grapple with a highly critical situation on the frontier and with two serious domestic calamities, bubonic plague and a devastating famine. In the sphere of foreign politics his administration saw improvement in the relations with Russia, the completion of the Afghan boundary line and the marking out of the frontier between Burma and China and Siam, all of which had been begun by Lansdowne. The work of the Durand commission was interrupted in 1894 by the rising of the Waziris, who felt that their independence was threatened, and a strong force was required to reduce them.

*Lord Elgin*

<sup>1</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 459-461, and *Education Report of Auxiliary Committee of the Ind. Stat. Commission*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Government of India*, Ilbert, 2nd Edn., pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108 and footnote.

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Trouble over the succession brought on, in 1895, a revolt in Chitral, where the British agent and his escort were besieged, until their relief by a remarkable feat of mountain warfare conducted by Colonel Kelly. Elgin wished to hold Chitral; the Rosebery government vetoed its retention; but the Conservative government came in before the troops could be withdrawn and reversed the decision.

In 1897 occurred the most formidable outbreak that the British arms had, up to that time been called upon to suppress on the North-West Frontier of India. The more critical nature of the operations in Waziristan in 1919 and 1920 was due to the fact that India had been drained of her best troops, and the campaign had to be fought with raw and inadequately trained forces.

The military operations of 1897-98 are known as the Tirah campaign, but the frontier was involved from the Mohmand country in the north to Southern Waziristan; and at one period the command of the Khyber was completely lost. The rising had its origin in the unrest caused by the demarcation of the boundary line, which brought the tribes within the sphere of British influence and gave rise to a fear of annexation. The flame was fanned by their religious leaders and it was not lessened by a pamphlet issued by the Amir urging the true believers "to stand firm when ye meet the unbelievers marching in great numbers against you."<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to add that in the subsequent operations Abdur Rahman preserved a strictly neutral attitude. More than 40,000 men had to be employed, including Imperial Service troops under the Indian princes, before the tribesmen submitted, paid their fines and surrendered rifles.

Plague entered India through Bombay, probably from China, in 1896, and rapidly spread through the Presidency. Strict quarantine regulations were issued and search for infected houses rigidly enforced; later, inoculation was introduced. The clash between modern sanitary ideas and ancient Hindu custom

<sup>1</sup> Nevill, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

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caused great antagonism to the plague campaign, and this was further inflamed by certain local Indian newspapers with regrettable results in the riots of 1897. By 1899, to quote Lord Curzon, "science and compulsion and evacuation at the point of the bayonet" were replaced by "conciliation, persuasion, the employment of volunteers agency, the relaxation of former rules."<sup>1</sup> The plague reached the Punjab in 1902 and a little later the United Provinces were infected. The greatest number of deaths from the disease occurred in 1907 (1,160,000) and 1911 (over 700,000).<sup>2</sup> The death-rate from plague has now fallen to less than 30,000 in the year.

The number of deaths in India from what are termed "preventible diseases" constitute an economic factor of serious importance, for they amount to five or six millions every year. A fourth of this mortality is due to malaria, and 10,000,000 annual admissions to hospital may be taken to occur on account of this disease alone. These are staggering figures, but it must be remembered that one-sixth of the human race live within the borders of India. The All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers stated in 1926 that the percentage of loss of efficiency of the average person in India from preventible malnutrition and disease was not less than twenty per cent., and that the percentage of infants born in India who reached a wage-earning age was about fifty.<sup>3</sup>

This terrible enervation is largely responsible for the poverty of the masses, and the best efforts of government are powerless to do more than palliate it.<sup>4</sup> Unhygienic habits and an apathy generally based on a religious conviction of the unalterability of fate, added as these are to poverty, make it exceedingly difficult to improve matters. Hope to a great extent lies in individual initiative combined with missionary effort by the educated classes. All that the government can do is to encourage the introduction of a more modern system of farming and to educate the masses up to a point at which they will be better fitted to help themselves.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II. p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931* Diagram facing p. 418

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1930-1931, pp. 161-162, 424 <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 413-436

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Failure of the monsoon in 1896, followed by a disastrously bad harvest in Western, Central and Southern India caused a famine of intense severity over an area of 570,000 square miles with a population of 130 millions. The number of starving people being kept alive by the public relief works rose at one time to nearly five millions, and in spite of the distributing facilities given by railways, government organization, and private charity, great numbers died of starvation and disease. This famine, the most widespread of any in the nineteenth century, cost the Government of India about ten millions sterling, and but for the funds raised throughout the British Empire the cost in life and in money would have been far heavier.

Lord Elgin was succeeded by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, who became Viceroy on 3rd January 1899, eight days before he was forty.

The new Viceroy was a man of high courage and great ambition. He had made his name in politics as Under-Secretary of State for India, and had piloted the Indian Councils Act through the Commons in 1892. He had distinguished himself as a traveller in Central Asia and as the author of important books on Persia and the Far East. He had toured the North-West Frontier, he had discovered the source of the Oxus, he had stayed for some time in Persia, seen the Far East from Siam to Peking, and impressed Abdur Rahman and his eldest son, Habibullah Khan, by his personality when he was the Amir's guest at Kabul.

Curzon's character was one of extreme contrasts. In his official life an air of haughty and chilling reserve, a brusque lack of consideration and, at times, a ruthless animosity concealed the generous impulses, the exuberant affection, the deep humbleness of heart realized only by an intimate circle. Of all the British rulers of India Dalhousie alone equalled him in dynamic energy and passion for work, in infinite attention to detail, in zeal for efficient administration.

Returning to India in 1899 "profoundly impressed by the greatness both of the task before him and of the opportunity which it offered, and at the height of his own powers, he dominated the

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administration in a way in which few, if any, of his predecessors had done and in which it will never again be given to any Governor-General to do. The history of British rule in India for seven years is the story of Lord Curzon's daily life and work."<sup>1</sup>

In 1900 a famine of extreme severity swept the country and was most intense in Bombay and the Central Provinces, to add to the horrors of plague. Over twenty-five million people in British India and thirty millions in the Indian States were affected, and in British India alone there were approximately one and a quarter million deaths from starvation. It was, as Curzon stated, "not merely a crop famine, but a fodder famine on an enormous scale, followed in many parts by a positive devastation of cattle—both plough cattle, buffaloes and milch kine. It affected and may almost be said to have annihilated the working capital of the agricultural classes." The Viceroy travelled through the famine districts organizing and superintending relief. Generous help was given by the Indian princes, especially the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Gwalior, and large sums were subscribed throughout the Empire for the starving people. The expense of relief was enormous. In 1896 there had been a million and a quarter of persons receiving relief, and in 1900-01, when the numbers were five millions, the estimated cost was about eight and a half million sterling.<sup>2</sup> Speaking generally the effects of the famine were more serious in the Indian States, while the death-rate in the majority of the famine districts in British India was scarcely in excess of normal. But the cultivators had suffered so severely that the Government of India remitted large arrears of land revenue.

The famine commission of 1901, the third since 1880, reported that relief organization could be considerably improved both in efficiency and economy. But, as the Viceroy observed, "to ask any government to prevent the occurrence of famine in a country the meteorological conditions of which are what they are here, is to ask us to wrest the keys of the universe from the hands of the Almighty."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Ronaldshay in *Life of Lord Curzon*, Preface to Vol. II.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II. pp. 86-87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 283-284.

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All that could be done was to lessen its effects. The irrigation committee of 1901-03 laid down the policy of expenditure on famine protection works, such as reservoirs, which could not be constructed from loan funds on account of the cost; and works of this nature have since been constructed more especially in the Bombay Deccan and in the Central Provinces where the risk of scarcity is always great.<sup>1</sup>

The existing machinery to deal with famine is now, humanly speaking, complete. Weekly reports keep the government informed of the rainfall and state of the crops. The provincial programmes of relief works are always ready, and relief circles can be formed and tools and plant at once assembled. If the rains fail the collection of revenue is suspended, and relief works are opened. When the rains eventually break, the villagers are moved from the large relief works to smaller works near their own villages, so that they can cultivate their fields, when loans are freely made for the purchase of seed, cattle and implements. In famine time the most stringent action is taken by the medical authorities against outbreaks of disease.<sup>2</sup>

On his arrival in India Curzon had at once taken up the frontier question. He saw that the Punjab government, in addition to the normal administration of a province, was unable to deal with the exacting and imperial responsibility of the North-West Frontier. He therefore made a separate North-West Frontier Province in 1901, directly under the Government of India, with a chief commissioner, and a judicial commissioner's court at Peshawar instead of the chief court at Lahore. The old North-West Province was renamed the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

The frontier was at that time protected by large bodies of troops in isolated positions, an expensive method which was also unsound from the military standpoint in the event of mobilization against Afghanistan or Russia. The Viceroy, whose policy had its origin in the Khyber agency established about thirty years earlier, made a

<sup>1</sup> *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 227-234.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern India*, 2nd Imp., pp. 187-188, and Ch. XII., by Sir Thomas Ward.



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compromise between the "close border" and Sandeman systems. The regular troops were withdrawn to their bases, tribal militia under British officers were substituted, and the tribesmen were paid to protect their own country. There was no occupation of tribal territory and no attempt at administration, however indefinite, up to the Durand Line except in the Wana, Tochi and Kurram valleys.

Curzon was opposed to frontier expeditions and preferred the action of blockade. But the Mahsud blockade, which began in 1900 and lasted a year, employed a considerable force, and before it ended involved the troops in hard marching and sharp fighting indistinguishable from a recognized frontier campaign.

The consistent policy of Abdur Rahman to avoid contact with the British was continued by his son Habibullah, *Afghanistan.* who succeeded in 1901. This position was complicated by Russian intrigue and by the quantities of modern arms which were coming into Afghanistan. In 1904, when Curzon was absent in England, the acting Viceroy, Lord Ampthill, sent a mission to Kabul under (Sir) Louis Dane, and a treaty was signed which accepted the claims of the Amir to arrears of subsidy and free admission of munitions.

British supremacy in the Persian Gulf, a matter of vital importance to India and to the Empire as a whole, was being *The Persian* undermined by the naval activities of Russia and by *Gulf.* the avowed intention of Germany to secure with the help of the Turks a terminus for the Baghdad railway at Koweit. Curzon urged the cabinet to take a strong line, and at the close of the South African War the Conservative government declared the application of a Monroe doctrine to the Persian Gulf. The Viceroy made this declaration effective by a tour to the chief ports in 1903, when he established satisfactory relations with the chiefs on the Arabian and Persian coasts.

The Teheran government was then far too weak to control its sheikhs, who were, in actual fact, as independent as the tribal leaders on the Arabian coast. The only power which could exercise control, police the Gulf, and deal with the gun-runners whose cargoes frequently went to the Pathan tribes, was the British.

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For the past ten years Iran has had a strong government which has asserted itself along its own coast to Mohammerah, and British control is now limited to the Arabian littoral. Great Britain has treaties of friendship with the sheikhs from Koweit to Aden; and Bahrein, where a British naval station and airport have been established, is the most important centre on the coast. In Curzon's day the British buoyed and beacons the waters of the Gulf; by 1935 Imperial Airways, the modern link between Europe, India, Singapore and Australia, had made the Persian Gulf the Suez Canal of the air.<sup>1</sup>

At another point of the compass the extension of Russian influence led to a further demonstration of the forward policy. *Tibet* Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, a suzerainty which was more than once manifested, until the Chinese Republic, by invasion. In theory ruled by the Dalai Lama, Tibet was governed throughout the nineteenth century by regency councils under whom the spiritual head of the country hardly, if ever, reached an age when he could assume power. But about 1898 the incarnate Dalai Lama, thanks to the watchfulness of the Russian Buddhist, Dorjjeff, attained his majority and overthrew his council.

Not unnaturally guided by Dorjjeff, the Dalai Lama sent three missions to Russia between 1898 and 1901. Tibet was a closed country to the British, and as all indirect means through the Chinese to make effective commercial agreements with the Tibetan government had failed, Curzon decided to send a mission to secure direct access to Tibet by a conference held within its borders. The mission under Colonel, afterwards Sir Francis, Younghusband, after being attacked by the Tibetans on the way up, reached Lhasa at the beginning of August 1904, and a treaty was signed a month later.<sup>2</sup> Its terms were made almost nugatory by a subsequent Convention with China and Russia by which Russia and England agreed to treat with Tibet only through China, send no representatives to Lhasa, and obtain no concessions such as mines, roads and telegraphs in the country.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times* (London) Articles, 12th and 13th June 1935.

<sup>2</sup> See *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, L. A. Waddell, 1905.

## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

Curzon had come to India determined to strengthen the relations between the paramount power and the ruling princes. He announced at Gwalior that "the native chief has become, by our policy, an integral factor in the Imperial organization of India. He is concerned not less than the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor in the administration of the country. I claim him as my colleague and partner."<sup>1</sup> To make this aim more practical he revived Lytton's idea of a council of princes, after a conference of rulers at Ajmer in 1904; but the home Government did not approve.

In his speech at Gwalior the Viceroy also emphasized the obligations of the princes to their own people, and foreshadowed the active interest which he was to show in keeping them to "the stern seat of duty." In 1900 he issued in the government gazette a decree that in future permission to Ruling Chiefs to visit countries outside India would be granted by the Government of India alone.<sup>2</sup> Largely owing to the financial difficulties of the States brought about by famine, Curzon made his authority felt to a considerable extent in their internal affairs, an active interest which had a perturbing effect.

Two years of famine had brought Hyderabad into serious financial difficulties, and the Viceroy decided to make a new arrangement with the Nizam which would ease the burdens imposed by treaty on that State. He accordingly went to Hyderabad in 1902. It was then arranged that the Hyderabad contingent should be absorbed into the Indian Army, and that Berar (assigned to the paramount power to satisfy the military charges) should be leased in perpetuity to the Government of India, the Nizam receiving twenty-five lakhs of rupees a year as rent for the districts. In Curzon's own words he had settled the famous Berar question which had been a standing sore between Hyderabad and the Government of India for fifty years.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II. p. 89, Speech at Gwalior, 29th November 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II. pp. 90-92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Ronaldshay, Vol. II. pp. 214-220.

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Berar in its anomalous position as non-British territory, and consequently outside the Government of India Act, was then absorbed into the Central Provinces as an annex under the Governor-General in Council, to be represented in the Central Provinces legislature in due course.<sup>1</sup>

To provide increased opportunities for the military aspirations of Indian gentlemen and princes, Curzon founded the Imperial Cadet Corps. The chief's colleges at Ajmer, Lahore and Rajkote and the Daly College at Indore, were the recruiting grounds, and after a three years' course those who passed the final tests became eligible for the rank and status of a British officer in staff or other extra-regimental employment.<sup>2</sup>

To the initiative of the Viceroy was due the assembly of the princes of India at the durbar held at Delhi on 1st January 1903, to celebrate the accession of King Edward VII in 1901 to the Emperorship of India. In urging his proposals on the home Government, Curzon declared: "The one thing most needed in India is the sense of common participation in a great political system of fellow citizenship of the British Empire. The opportunities that exist of creating and fostering this feeling are few."<sup>3</sup> For the elaborate ceremony, when the King-Emperor was represented by the Duke of Connaught, and at which a hundred ruling chiefs and about 173,000 people were present, the Viceroy was to a great extent personally responsible.<sup>4</sup>

Nor did the Viceroy, who could evoke the stately magnificence still to be found in India, forget the splendours of the past. An archæological department, mainly for research, had been in existence since 1862, but Curzon, when he came to India, was horrified at the desecration and neglect of the priceless architectural heritage of the country. Some

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. pp. 72-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II pp. 126-128.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> The detail personally considered by Lord Curzon is illustrated by his rejection of "Onward Christian Soldiers" for the British Parade Service on the grounds that two of its lines "would not be particularly appropriate" (*Life*, Vol II p. 230).

## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

of the finest Mogul monuments in India were either in a state of ruinous decay or, whitewashed and plastered, used for such purposes as post-offices, petty courts and private houses. In 1902 Curzon appointed a trained classical archæologist in Sir John Marshall as Director-General, to preserve the ancient monuments and to explore important sites. Curzon's inspiration alone made possible the work which his able Director-General has since accomplished. The excavations at Taxila, in the Buddhist sites of Bihar and Orissa, and the remarkable discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are of world-wide interest.<sup>1</sup> The present Director-General is an Indian, the department is staffed by Hindus and Moslems, and more than three thousand monuments are under the care of the archæological survey.

On the recommendations of the Indian Currency Committee an Act was passed in 1899 making the British sovereign legal tender in India and fixing the rupee at 1s. 4d.

*Finance.*

Famine made remission of taxes impossible in the early part of Curzon's Viceroyalty, but the Budget of 1903 gave considerable concessions. Middle-class wage-earners received a remission of income-tax and the cultivators found relief in a reduction in the salt duty. Two good harvests and wider markets for cotton and tea increased national prosperity, and this was reflected in the seventh and last Budget of Curzon's administration. Taxation to the extent of £1,371,000 was remitted, a million pounds were spent on administrative reforms, better postal facilities were provided, and in spite of heavy expenditure on the army and the railways, there was a surplus of over £900,000 on an eighty million budget.<sup>2</sup>

"The peasant," to quote the Viceroy's own pronouncement, "has been in the background of every policy for which I have been responsible, of every surplus of which I have assisted in the disposition." He was determined to vindicate the British land settlement and revenue policy in the eyes

*Land Policy.*

<sup>1</sup> An accessible summary of recent work is to be found in *Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, pp. 481-495.

<sup>2</sup> *History of India*, Trotter, Edn. 1917, pp. 451, 455.

of the world,<sup>1</sup> and his resolution of 1901, a document of the greatest impartiality and amazing insight, stands as a landmark in the history of the land revenue policy of India under British rule. Curzon carried his aims into effect by constant legislation, and he relieved the stress in time of famine by the Suspensions and remission resolution.

However thrifty an Indian small-holder may be, his lack of capital and the fact that he has to wait some months for a return for his labours and expenditure—apart from the expense of religious and social festivals—forces him into debt. The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 aimed at preventing money-lenders and shopkeepers from buying land from hereditary cultivators, or from holding such land on mortgage for more than twenty years without government consent. There was similar legislation later for some other parts of India. But it was difficult to make these provisions effective, and the problems of rural indebtedness and the "fragmentation" of holdings, which is especially prevalent in the Punjab, had to be tackled in other ways.

The reports of the Famine Commission of 1901 and of the Irrigation Commission of 1903 were acted upon by Curzon with the far-sighted statesmanship which has led to the present progress in agriculture. The debt question was met by the Co-operative Credit Act of 1904. Eight years later the Co-operative Societies Act encouraged the extension of the village credit societies<sup>2</sup> to replace the money lenders whose activities have also been checked by other legislation.

In 1901 Curzon appointed an inspector-general of agriculture. In 1903, with the generous donation of £30,000 made by Mr. Henry Phipps of Chicago, he was enabled to submit to the Secretary of State the scheme which founded the Agricultural and Research Institute at Pusa in Bihar, where the experimental farm and agri-

<sup>1</sup> Specifically in answer to Romesh C. Dutt whose challenges were made in his open letters to the Viceroy, and later in his *Land Problems in India* and in *India in the Victorian Age*.

<sup>2</sup> In 1908 there were under 1500 co-operative societies in India: in 1930 there were 88,693 in British India and 15,494 in the Indian States (*Moral and Material Progress, 1930-1931*, p. 591 and footnote).

cultural college are supported by a government grant. The institute<sup>1</sup> is admirably equipped in laboratories, museums, libraries and lecture halls, and its work includes every branch of chemical science relating to agriculture which is not covered by the Imperial Institutes now established in other parts of India. In 1929 a Council of Agriculture of Research was formed to co-ordinate the central and provincial work in the interests of Indian agriculture with valuable practical results.

Curzon's view of the policy of education was summarized in his remark: "Ever since the cold breath of Macaulay's rhetoric passed over the field of the Indian languages and Indian textbooks the elementary education of the people in their own tongues has shrivelled and pined." Three out of every four country villages had no school, and more than four-fifths of the boys of school-going age were without even primary education. He determined to put elementary education on a sounder footing and to begin his reforms in the high schools and colleges.

The Universities Act of 1904 gave these bodies new powers of government, and laid down the policy of supplementing examinations by thorough general teaching in order to raise the standard of higher education. The university senates were remodelled and affiliated colleges were placed under regulation and inspection. These reforms were good in themselves but they aroused considerable opposition from those who were affected by them. Later Acts have led to the transference of the control of education to Indians. In elementary education Curzon secured a large permanent annual grant which led to the opening of thousands of new schools.

The Bengal Presidency has experienced more changes of boundary than any other British political unit, and at different times it has included Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Agra. Until 1911 Calcutta was the capital of British India. Bengal is now the smallest in area of all the governor's provinces with the exception of Assam and the North-West Frontier Province, although its population is rather larger than

*Partition of  
Bengal*

<sup>1</sup> Transferred to Delhi after the Behar earthquake of 1934.

that of Great Britain. But its size at the beginning of this century, the isolation of its eastern districts, and the consequent difficulties of administration and police supervision decided Curzon to divide the province. In 1905 the short-lived province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was created with the commercial and educational centre of Dacca as its capital.

The announcement of the partition in the face of strong opposition to its original proposal raised a storm of bitter Hindu resentment, which swept over the politically-minded classes throughout India. It had its origin in the fear of Moslem preponderance in the new province, and it was strengthened by the belief that the partition was aimed at weakening the national movement by dividing the province which had begun to take its leadership. The agitation was unlike anything previously known in the country. Its originators, such as Surendranath Bannerjea, in entire good faith denied that the movement was anti-British: they wished to use constitutional means to awaken public opinion in England to the seriousness of the situation.<sup>1</sup> But the movement involved a boycott of British goods which was enthusiastically supported by the student community and the younger generation of the politically-minded classes. It introduced an unbalanced and explosive element into the national movement, and this led to the sedition and terrorism that respectable Indian public opinion has had regrettable reason to deplore. The Congress Sessional at Benares in 1905 displayed a spirit very different from the sentiments of its early meetings. The British connection still appeared a blessing, but British rule was now held to be a curse, and self-government "similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire"<sup>2</sup> was proclaimed to be the essential remedy.

The conduct of the anti-partition campaign completely alienated the Moslem community from the Congress movement, and in 1906 the All-India Moslem League was founded to safeguard the interests of the community.

<sup>1</sup> *A Nation in Making*, Sir Surendranath Bannerjea, pp. 187-189.

<sup>2</sup> G. K. Gokhale at the Twenty-first Indian National Congress; *Report*, p. 13.



## INDIA UNDER THE CROWN

Curzon went to England for six months in 1904 on the understanding that his term of office was to be extended. *The Military Controversy.* He found the cabinet were not in accord with him on various points while they were emphatically opposed to the views of his Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, who had been appointed in 1902, and held that in the prospective agreement with Afghanistan, then being decided by the cabinet, military considerations should predominate.

The Viceroy returned to India in December to be plunged into an acute military controversy. The value of Kitchener's reorganization of the Army in India, with a view to the more rapid concentration of an efficient field army upon the North-West Frontier, was beyond question.<sup>1</sup> But the commander-in-chief, when he characterized the existing system as "faulty, inefficient and incapable of the expansion necessary for a great war," went beyond these practical reforms. He proposed, as his remedy, the fusion of the executive functions of commander-in-chief and the administrative functions of the military member of council in a single individual, either one or the other. The Viceroy pointed out that the system had an almost unprecedented consensus of military authority to support it, and that Kitchener's proposals would in practice substitute without any check a military autocracy (in the commander-in-chief) for the Government of India. To the constitutional objection the Viceroy added another argument. He represented that to the almost incalculably onerous responsibilities already resting upon the commander-in-chief the proposal would add the control of the administrative and spending departments (and consequently the preparation of the military budget), correspondence with the Secretary of State and the local governments and a mass of miscellaneous routine—"an impossible burden for one man to assume."

The decision of every other member of council when the question came up on 10th March 1905 was against the commander-in-chief.

<sup>1</sup> In 1903 the designation "Indian Staff Corps" was abolished and from that date the British and Indian officers and the rank and file of Indian units, have been called members of one corps "The Indian Army." For Lord Kitchener's reorganization see *Evolution of the Army in India*, pp. 25-30.

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The home Government, standing between the strong personalities and great public services of Curzon and Kitchener, offered a wavering compromise in the form of a military supply member. But as the cabinet declined to accept safeguards which Curzon held to be essential, he resigned in the middle of August 1905, and on the 21st of the month Lord Minto was appointed in his place.<sup>1</sup>

The new system of a military supply member and a corresponding department duly came into existence. There was, as Curzon had foreseen, hardly any work for this department to do, and in January 1909 it was absorbed into the Army department and disappeared. That the burden was impossible for one man to assume was proved in 1915. Under the test of war the dual functions of the commander-in-chief led inexorably to the breakdown of the military administration which brought disaster in Mesopotamia.

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## CHRONOLOGY

1858. Indian Government transferred from the Company to the Crown.  
Lord Canning Governor-General and first Viceroy.  
1861. Indian Councils Act.  
Famine in Upper India.  
1862. Grant of Sanads of succession to Indian States.  
Lord Elgin Viceroy.  
1863. Death of Amir Dost Muhammad.  
Ambela Campaign.  
1864. Sir John Lawrence Viceroy.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II pp 373-389.

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- 1865-1867. Orissa Famine.
- 1868. Shere Ali, Amir of Afghanistan.
- 1869. Lord Mayo Viceroy.
- 1872. Lord Northbrook Viceroy.
- 1873-1874. Bihar Famine.
- 1875. The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) visited India.
- 1876. Lord Lytton Viceroy.  
Royal Titles Act.  
Occupation of Quetta.
- 1876-1878. Famine in Southern India.
- 1877. Foundation of Aligarh College.
- 1878-1880. Second Afghan War.
- 1879. Indian Civil Service Reform.
- 1880. Lord Ripon Viceroy.
- 1881. Restoration of Mysore.  
First Indian Factory Act.
- 1882. Local Self-government Acts.
- 1884. Lord Dufferin Viceroy.
- 1885-1887. Tenancy Acts.
- 1885. Panjdeh Incident.  
Third Burmese War.  
Indian National Congress held its first meeting.
- 1886. Annexation of Upper Burma.
- 1888. Lord Lansdowne Viceroy.
- 1891. Manipur Massacre.
- 1892. Indian Councils Act.
- 1893. Army reorganization.  
Durand Line Demarcation Commission; forward policy on North-West Frontier.
- 1894. Lord Elgin Viceroy.
- 1895. Chitral Expedition.
- 1896-1897. Appearance of Plague; Famine in Western, Central and Southern India.
- 1897-1898. Tirah Campaign.
- 1899. Lord Curzon, Viceroy.
- 1901. Creation of North-West Frontier Province.  
Famine Commission Report.
- 1903. Agricultural Legislation.
- 1904. Tibet Expedition reached Lhasa.  
Universities Act.
- 1905. Russo-Japanese War.  
Partition of Bengal: political unrest.  
Resignation of Lord Curzon.

## CHAPTER XX

### Progress towards Responsible Government

BEFORE the British supremacy only two empires, the Maurya and the Mogul, had approached universal and stabilized sovereignty. These employed an immense number of officials, but whether the government were Buddhist and of the soil or Moslem and foreign there was always personal contact between king and people. The ruler might be a benevolent despot or he might be a tyrant, but his administration for good or evil was the visible and direct exercise of absolute authority. The greatest of the Mauryas had heard the causes of his people during his daily massage, and the most tyrannical of the Moguls would sit among his subjects granting petitions or ordering an instant execution.

Under this autocratic rule the silent masses of Hindu India, indifferent to dynastic struggles, weathered as best they could the storms of invasion and conquest which swept the country for more than seven hundred years. Then towards the close of the eighteenth century a new era began. The East India Company, representing European civilization, extended British supremacy over the country. In the territories under its direct rule autocracy completely disappeared and a form of crown colony government, in which supreme authority was aloof and impersonal, took its place. From the standpoint of Hindu leaders of thought like Rabindranath Tagore the rule of India by foreign conquerors who had gone before was "a mere drift on the surface of her life. This time it was the Nation of the West driving the tentacles of its machinery deep down into the soil."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nationalism* (3rd Imp., 1918), p. 8.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Successive Acts strengthened the control of the British Parliament.

*Growth of  
Parliamentary  
Control.*

But until India came under the Crown in 1858 supreme authority over British India was divided between the court of Directors at East India House, consisting of wealthy city merchants and retired servants of the company, and the board of control which in practice meant its President. Lord Dalhousie called it a "board of interference," but the authorities in London rarely imposed their own policy upon India. Until the Red Sea cable was laid in 1870 the Government of India was remote from control; and it was this annihilation of distance which made it possible for the home Government to object beforehand to action which the British authorities in India might wish to take.

British rule as it spread over the country gave India universal peace with a standard of justice which its peoples had never known even under Asoka; and this "applied science" of government of the Indian by the British, with its machine-like efficiency and the attitude of Imperial Rome in its impartiality, reached its height under Lord Curzon.

But in the meanwhile another factor had come into play inspired by the westernization introduced by Lord William Bentinck and eagerly supported by Macaulay. Sheltered by the security of the British power, influenced by western thought, and with the educated classes throughout the country linked up by the spread of English as a common medium of expression the small, politically-minded groups in British India came to develop new ambitions. The original aim of the National Congress was the reform and enlargement of the provincial councils,<sup>1</sup> the Congress of 1916 was "of opinion that the system of government in the self-governing British colonies should be extended to India."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon whole-heartedly devoted his restless energy to what he believed to be the cause of the Indian people, but he had shown a

<sup>1</sup> *A Nation in Making* (3rd Imp., 1927), pp 98-103.

<sup>2</sup> *The Growth and Development of National Thought in India*, Ishwar Na'h Topa (Hamburg), 1930, p. 153.

consistent disregard of the public opinion which Britain had educated. His policy was one of centralization, and he openly declared that the efficiency he demanded was only possible by reserving the higher posts for Englishmen. Also, he saw nothing in the national leaders but the personal ambitions of a few men struggling for place and power. His remodelling of the Calcutta corporation, his university policy and above all his partition of Bengal created the political discontent which was becoming increasingly evident when Lord Minto succeeded him in November 1905.

There were other causes which had much to do with the growth of anti-western sentiment. The startling victories of Oriental Japan over the European power of Russia, which for half a century Great Britain had considered her most formidable Eastern rival, had made a deep impression throughout India. The effect upon the development of the Indian nationalist movement was most marked, for it led the educated classes to dwell upon the past achievements of Asiatic peoples and to assert the superiority of Indian culture over that of Europe, at a time when the mechanical inventions introduced by the British into India which had at first seemed so miraculous had begun to lose their impressiveness.

Two groups had sprung up within the nationalist movement. The moderates were led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale of the same Brahman caste as the Peshwas, and by Surendranath Bannerjea, the prominent Bengal Brahman. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (who was a Chitpavan) was at the head of the extremists, and he used the cult of the Maratha Sivaji against two alien civilizations by recalling past Moslem defeats and by inciting violent discontent with British rule. The Tilak press must be held to be responsible to a definite extent for the succession of cowardly assassinations by the extremist rank and file which have brought such disgrace upon young political India.

Gokhale's view may be illustrated by his remarks during the Budget debate in March 1906: "The question of the conciliation of the educated classes . . . raises issues which will tax all the resources of British statesmanship. There is but one way in which this conciliation can be secured, and that is by associating these

## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

classes more and more with the government of their own country. This is the policy to which England stands committed by solemn pledges given in the past. . . . What the country needs at the moment above everything else is a government national in spirit even though it may be foreign in personnel." <sup>1</sup>

Minto sympathized with these views. He believed that government with the assent of the governed was a necessity, and that Indians should be admitted to a share in it. In August 1906 he appointed the Arundel Committee to consider the questions of a council of princes with the possibility of representation on the Viceroy's council, an Indian member of council, increased representation on that council, and enlargement of the scope of Budget debate. By 1907 the matter reached the stage of an official despatch to the Secretary of State; and the King's speech at the opening of Parliament had already hinted at Indian reform.

In the meanwhile the political atmosphere was growing stormy. The Punjab government had handled the Chenab canal colony with less than its usual wisdom and something distinctly like a breach of faith. Agitators had preached anti-British propaganda through the province; and in April and May of 1907 there were serious riots in Lahore and at Rawalpindi. A year earlier the anarchism with which, as Surendranath Bannerjea has said, no one can have any sympathy,<sup>2</sup> had begun its terrorist campaign in Bengal. In 1907 there were riots in the Madras Presidency. Throughout the autumn seditious meetings were frequent in Calcutta, the police were stoned and in December an attempt was made to murder the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The Government met the situation with the Seditious Meetings Act.

Communal differences were at the same time becoming acute in Eastern Bengal. The Muhammadans of the new province had viewed the partition from a very different angle than that of the Hindus. Moslem sentiment was opposed to the violent agitation, the boycott of English goods and the revolutionary outrages which

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Minto*, by John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *A Nation in Making*, p. 234.

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followed. Resentment of the tactics of the Hindu extremists led in May 1907 to a general rising of the Muhammadan peasantry in the Mymensingh district against their Hindu landlords and creditors.

The meeting of Congress at Surat in December 1907 caused an immediate collision between the moderates and the extremists. The choice as President of Sir Rash Behari Ghose and not Mr. B. G. Tilak was accompanied by a free fight. Tilak and his supporters left the Congress and the moderate party drew up the Congress creed which declared self-government within the Empire its object, and constitutional means the method of gaining it.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1908 the Viceroy abolished, as far as lay in his power, the disabilities of Indian gentlemen in military service to rise to higher posts; and Morley agreed to the appointment of an Indian Member of Council.

The year 1909 saw the passing of the Indian Councils Act which brought in the Morley-Minto reforms. They made a considerable advance in constitutional progress, but they were in no sense a step towards the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, with which Morley had declared he would have nothing at all to do.<sup>2</sup> Until 1919 the Secretary of State, with his constitutional responsibility to Parliament, remained the supervising and controlling power over the whole field of Indian legislation and administration. Lord Morley appointed two Indians to his council but the Secretary of State's decision remained final, with certain previously established exceptions when differences of opinion arose.

Before the Act was passed two Moslem deputations made strong claims for separate representation. They urged that in the existing state of tension between the two great communities no genuine Moslem representative would secure election in a mixed electorate, since they were in a minority<sup>3</sup> in all except two provinces; and that communal riots

<sup>1</sup> *A Nation in Making*, pp. 235, 236.

<sup>2</sup> House of Lords, 17th December 1908.

<sup>3</sup> In British India the Muhammadans form 26.69 of the population.



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at the polls could only be prevented by separate electorates, a system already successfully adopted in municipalities and district boards. To this the Moslems added the political importance of their community and its contribution to imperial defence.

Replying in 1906 to the deputation led by the Aga Khan, the Viceroy made the first official acknowledgement of the Muhammadan claim for separate representation, a statement regarded by Moslems as a definite pledge. The Viceroy in agreeing with the justice of the claims made by the deputation, went on to say: "I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent."<sup>1</sup> The Government of India accordingly proposed, and in this they were supported by Mr Gokhale, that except where special protection was unnecessary, Muhammadans should be given separate electorates while retaining their right to vote in the general electorates. The Secretary of State accepted the principle of securing adequate Muhammadan representation, but he did not like the idea of separate electorates. The reforms were giving India some features of the democratic principles of government prevalent in England, and communalism was hardly in keeping with those principles. But the insistent and powerfully-argued claims of the largest minority unit in India could not be denied.<sup>2</sup> After hearing a deputation of the All-India Moslem League in January 1909 Morley accepted the Muhammadan claim. Here began that recognition of communal representation based upon the provision of separate electorates which has survived vigorous Hindu disagreement and was confirmed by the "communal award" of 1932.

By the reforms of 1909 the official majority in the provincial legislative councils disappeared; the councils were enlarged up to a maximum of fifty "additional" members in the larger and thirty in the smaller provinces. The

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Minto*, pp. 243, 244

<sup>2</sup> *The Indian Horizon*, the Maharajahdiraja of Burdwan, p. 16.

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greater part of these additional members were non-officials elected either by groups of local authorities, large landholders, trade associations or universities. The Moslem community was specially represented, except in the Punjab, the Central Provinces and Burma, by the addition of from two to five members to each council, chosen by the vote of a special Moslem electorate.

The central legislative council was also remodelled. To the Governor-General and the seven members of his executive council there were added some sixty "additional" members of whom not more than twenty-eight could be officials, while twenty-seven of the remainder were not only non-official but were elected. As in the case of the provincial councils, election was partly indirect and partly direct. Six Muhammadans were returned by Moslem vote. This distribution of seats secured an official majority which the Secretary of State justified on the grounds that the Governor-General's council "in its legislation as well as in its legislative character should continue to be so constituted as to ensure its constant and uninterrupted power to fulfil the constitutional obligations that it owes, and always must owe, to His Majesty's Government and to the Imperial Parliament."<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a council of princes presented difficulties, and had to be dropped. But as regards British India the reforms of 1909 were an earnest attempt to bring representative Indian opinion in touch with the government; and on administrative matters resolutions could now be moved by non-official members in the legislative councils.

While the moderates of Congress led by Gokhale were urging co-operation with the government and condemning the violent plunge of students into politics, anarchist societies chiefly of youths inflamed by a scurrilous Press were committing the series of murderous outrages which marked the years 1908 and 1909. The Viceroy, whom the terrorists attempted to assassinate in 1909, was not to be deterred from meeting as far as possible the political aspirations of honest reformers by these

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. pp. 117-119, 183-187.

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manifestations of sedition, riot and murder. He called upon "the people of India, and all who have the future welfare of this country at heart, to unite in the support of law and order and to join in one common effort to eradicate a cowardly conspiracy from our midst."<sup>1</sup> To enforce law and order the Viceroy in 1908 promoted Acts for the summary trial of seditious conspiracies, and to deal with newspapers publishing incitements to murder and violence and he also enforced the regulation of 1818 which was an equivalent to the power of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Great Britain.

Minto, who had previously consulted the leading princes as to the spread of sedition in several of the States, made an important statement of policy at Udaipur in November 1909.<sup>2</sup> He emphasized the identity of interests between the Imperial government and the princes, upon the mutual recognition of which the future history of India would be largely moulded. "Our policy," he said, "is, with rare exceptions, one of non-interference in the affairs of Native States. But in guaranteeing their internal independence and in undertaking their protection against external aggression, it naturally follows that the Imperial government has assumed a certain degree of responsibility for the general soundness of their administration and would not consent to incur the reproach of being an indirect instrument of misrule. There are certain matters in which it is necessary for the Government of India to safeguard the interests of the community as a whole, as well as those of the paramount Power, such as railways, telegraphs, and other services of an Imperial character. But the relationship of the supreme government to the States is one of suzerainty."

The Viceroy went on to point out the varying circumstances, such as existing treaties and the stage of development, feudal or constitutional of individual principalities, which made uniformity of treatment and the issue of general rules quite impossible.

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the Legislative Council 8th June 1908 (*Life of Lord Minto*, pp. 274, 275).

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-1929*, p. 19.

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*Opium.* In 1907 the Government of India began the systematic reduction in the export of opium to China which led to the extinction of that trade six years later.<sup>1</sup>

*Lord Minto and India* Lord Minto's viceroyalty ended in November 1910. Mrs. Annie Besant, who later became for a time a leader of the Congress left wing, thus summed up Minto's work in India: "He tried to draw the two nations together in spite of the difficulties. He inherited many sad traditions and the wave of life sweeping over India showed itself in many objectionable forms. He rightly struck down violence, but did not refuse the gift of self-government. He has done what few would do in the midst of danger and criticism. He kept a straight course. Flawless justice and perfect courage laid the foundations of self-government within the empire. Of his own initiative, taking full responsibility, he set free the deportees. A man so strong, far-seeing and quiet, who makes no boast, says little, does much, is the best type of English gentleman."<sup>2</sup>

*The Imperial Durbar.* During the administration of Lord Hardinge, the next Viceroy, the King-Emperor George V and Queen Mary visited India. Their Coronation Durbar was held at Delhi on 12th December 1911, when the ruling princes offered their homage. The occasion was marked by grants of land, a large gift for education, release of prisoners, extra pay to the ranks of the Indian Army and to the lower grades of the civil service, and the Indian Army was declared eligible for the Victoria Cross. The announcement was made that the capital of British India was to be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. The Bengals were reunited under a Governor-in-Council; Bihar, and Orissa became a separate province with a Lieutenant-Governor; and Assam was placed in charge of a Chief Commissioner.

*The War of 1914-1918.* The world-war broke out in August 1914, and the magnificent response of British India and the States is shown by the contribution of 1,302,000 combatants and non-combatants (such as labour corps) to the Imperial forces. Indian

<sup>1</sup> The opium question is dealt with on pp. 463, 464.      <sup>2</sup> *Life of Lord Minto*, p. 320.

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troops fought in the trenches of Flanders, in East Africa, in Palestine and in Mesopotamia. Indian representatives were invited to take part in the Imperial War Conference, and afterwards at the Peace Conference.

The political effect in India of the war was to strengthen the demand for free institutions; while the entry of Turkey on the side of the Central European powers made a deep and disturbing impression on the Moslem community.

*Moslems and the Great War.*

Until about the close of the nineteenth century the average Indian Moslem had at least subconsciously "looked upon himself as a member of a universal religious brotherhood, sojourning in a land in which a neutral government, with a neutral outlook, kept law and order and justice. His political and communal pride was satisfied by the fact that his co-religionists in Turkey, Persia, Morocco and (nominally at least) in Egypt enjoyed independence and national sovereignty. While his allegiance was to the British Crown, his political self-respect was satisfied by the existence of the Sultans at Constantinople and Fez and of the Shah and Khedive at Teheran and Cairo. . . . [Moreover] the British Government was the mainstay and support in the Diplomatic arena of the independent Mahomedan States. . . . Within a generation the whole Mahomedan world-outlook changed. Forces beyond Moslem control led to the disappearance of Mahomedan rule and independence in North Africa. Persia gradually drifted into being merely a name for spheres of influence between Britain and Russia. Turkey herself, the last of the independent Mahomedan dominions, was drawn into the Teutonic orbit, first through economic and semi-political causes and finally by her participation in the Great War on the German side"<sup>1</sup>

A realization of the prejudicial effect of dissensions brought the All-India Moslem League into alliance with Congress. At the Lucknow Congress of 1916 a resolution was carried that "statesmanship demands that Great Britain should announce to the people of this country that a self-governing India is the goal of her policy, and grant us a substantial instalment of reform after the war as a

<sup>1</sup> *India in Transition*, H.H. The Aga Khan, 1918, pp. 22, 23

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step towards that goal.”<sup>1</sup> This was moved by Surendranath Bannerjea and supported by Tilak, now restored to the fold, and by Mrs. Besant. At the end of December (1916) the Lucknow Pact between the Hindus and Moslems settled the proportionate election of representatives of the two communities on the provincial and All-Indian legislatures.

But the great masses of the people, both Hindu and Muhammadan, cared little for the manœuvres of the politicians, or the reactions of the war. In 1915 and in 1916 there was serious rioting in the Patna district over cow-sacrifice at the Bakr-id festival. In 1917 large Hindu mobs wrecked the Moslem villages in a neighbouring district, and the disturbances were only suppressed by calling out nearly 2000 police and troops. But except for a savage outbreak in the United Provinces in 1918 there were no further communal disturbances for four years.<sup>2</sup>

In August 20th, 1917 Mr. Edwin Montagu, who had become Secretary of State for India in July, made a most important announcement of policy in the House of Commons: “The policy of His Majesty’s Government . . . is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. . . . Substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible. . . . Progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.”

The Secretary of State was sent by the Cabinet to India to

<sup>1</sup> Ishwar Nath Topa, *op. cit.*, pp. 170, 171.

<sup>2</sup> *Political India*, p. 113.

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examine the situation and confer with the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford and with the provincial governments. In July 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms was published.<sup>1</sup> The Report embodied four propositions:

1. Complete popular control, as far as possible, in local bodies.
2. Immediate steps towards responsible government should be taken in the Provinces.
3. The Government of India to remain wholly responsible to Parliament, and its authority in essential matters to continue "pending experience of the effect of the provincial changes," while the Indian legislative council should be made more representative.
4. In proportion as the proposed reforms should take effect, the control of Parliament and the Secretary of State over the Government of India and provincial governments should be relaxed.<sup>2</sup>

Authority was no longer to be concentrated at the centre, and the phrase "responsible government," inserted in the declaration of 1917 by Lord Curzon,<sup>3</sup> pointed to a parliamentary system, a form of government entirely new to India.

The Montagu-Chelmsford report indicated "in the eventual future of India a sisterhood of States self-governing in all matters of purely local or provincial interest," with a central government over them in which there would also be a place for the Indian States.

An important outcome of the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals was the setting up of the chamber of princes by Royal Proclamation on 8th February 1921. The ceremony of inauguration took place in the Diwan-i-am of the Mogul palace in Delhi when the Duke of Connaught, on behalf of the King-Emperor, made the following announcement: "In My former Proclamation I repeated the assurance, given on many occasions by My Royal Predecessors and Myself, of My determination ever to maintain unimpaired the privileges,

<sup>1</sup> Cmd. 9109 of 1918

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I pp. 121, 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. III pp. 167, 168.

rights and dignities of the Princes of India. The Princes may rest assured that this pledge remains inviolate and inviolable."

The chamber included 108 leading princes, members in their own right, and 12 additional members elected by group voting from among the rulers of 127 of the other States. The Viceroy presided, and the Princes annually elected their own Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor. A standing committee of seven members was formed to advise the Viceroy on matters referred to the committee by him. The chamber was given no executive powers, and in no way affected the individual relations between any Indian State and the representative of the Crown. But it was an important forward step in co-operation between ruling princes of India and the paramount Power.

The Montagu-Chelmsford report was greeted with an angry outburst from the extremists. Mrs. Besant, in her publication *New India* called it unworthy to be offered, an opinion which she afterwards reversed, and B. G. Tilak dismissed it as "entirely unacceptable." The moderates whose policy was to obtain self-government within the empire for India by constitutional agitation, welcomed the report and decided to co-operate with the government, while they looked upon opposition as "treason against the motherland."<sup>1</sup> A special session of the Congress was called to consider the report. Sir Surendranath Bannerjea and the moderate party realizing that the extremists had "captured the machinery," refused to attend, and reluctantly separated themselves from the national institution which they had created.<sup>2</sup> Both moderates and extremists sent representatives to appear before the Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament to which the Reform Bill was referred.

The Government of India Act of 1919, which contained a pre-  
Government ofIndia Act 1919.amble restating the declaration of policy of 1917, came into force early in 1921. The instrument of instructions to the Governor-General declared: "For above all things it is Our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of Our Empire may

<sup>1</sup> *A Nation in Making*, pp. 312-314.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* , pp. 305-308.



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come to fruition, to the end that British India may attain its due place among Our Dominions." <sup>1</sup>

By the new constitution single-chamber legislatures (ranging in size from 125 members in Bengal to 53 in Assam) were established in the Governor's provinces,<sup>2</sup> while the remaining areas were administered by commissioners responsible to the Government of India. At least 70 per cent. of the members had to be elected; not more than 20 per cent. were "official," that is to say British or Indian civil servants appointed by the Governor; and the remainder nominated members appointed by the Governor to represent minority groups or special interests.

The principle of the special representation of Moslems through separate electorates was continued but the second vote in general constituencies<sup>3</sup> was abolished. Separate representation was also given to Sikhs in the Punjab, Indian Christians (then nearly three millions in British India), Anglo-Indians (then nearly 100,000), Europeans and, in most provinces, to the big landholders. The depressed classes and labour were provided for by nomination.

A franchise committee ascertained the number of persons who could "be reasonably entrusted with the duties of citizenship," and the franchise was conferred upon about one-thirtieth of the total population, about one-tenth of the adult males. The qualifications were residence in the constituency, coupled with the payment of a small amount of land revenue, rent or rates. All payers of income-tax and all pensioned or discharged officers and men of the regular forces were also given votes. As a large proportion of those qualified (other than ex-members of the Indian army) are illiterate, ballot papers have the addition of symbols to distinguish the candidates, such as a Union Jack, a farm cart or a merchant's scales.<sup>3</sup> The provincial legislatures were empowered to give votes to women, and all of them have since done so. Madras led the way, and within ten years a lady member was unanimously elected deputy president

<sup>1</sup> In para. IX.

<sup>2</sup> Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, Assam, Burma (1923) and the North-West Frontier Province (1931).

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. pp. 135, 136.

of that legislature. But in spite of the desire to create as wide a franchise as possible, a property qualification excluded whole sections of the population, in particular the general body of the poor and nearly all women.

The feature of interest of the new provincial system was the division of responsibility known as dyarchy. The whole business of provincial government was divided into "transferred" and "reserved" subjects. The reserved subjects, which included irrigation, land revenue, provincial loans, famine relief and, in most of the provinces, forests, came under the Governor and his executive council of four, or two, members. These members (half of whom are, in practice, Indians) were to be appointed by the Crown, and not being responsible to the legislature could not be removed by an adverse vote. The two (or three) ministers appointed by the Governor to administer the transferred subjects—education, public health, excise, local self-government and other business—were made responsible to the legislature.

The Governor was given the power to dissent, if necessary, from the advice of his ministers on a transferred subject, and also to take over temporarily any such subject. He could also certify any essential Bill or financial grant concerning a reserved subject which the Legislature had rejected, and so make the measure effective in spite of an adverse vote. The previous consent of the Governor-General was required for any Bill affecting a central subject or concerning the central government. All Bills were subject to the Governor-General's consent, and some had to be reserved for his consideration. But "one-man government" was at an end.

The chief alteration made by the Act of 1919 in the central government was to convert the Indian legislative council into two Chambers, the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly.

The central government remained in charge of all extra-provincial interests, including defence, foreign affairs, tariffs and customs, posts and railways, public debt and law. Its structure was now as follows.

The executive council of the Governor-General (unlimited by statute but normally of seven members) consisted of the Commander-

in-Chief and members in charge of home, finance (usually an expert from England), law, commerce, education, health and lands, and industries and labour. The Viceroy with the portfolio of the foreign and political department, and with his foreign secretary (for external and frontier affairs) and his political secretary (for the Indian States), each occupying a seat as a nominated official in either the Council of State or the legislative assembly, maintained the principle of control which had been in force since the days of the first Governor-General. The executive council, whose Indian members could be either official or non-official, was made in no way responsible to the Indian legislature, of which they became *ex officio* members.

The Council of State was given a maximum of 60 members, of whom 34 were to be elected and the remainder nominated, not more than 20 of these being official, including nominations from the executive council. The president of the council was chosen by the Governor-General. The electorate for members of the Council of State was very small and for the most part grouped in communal constituencies. Property qualifications were pitched so high as to secure the representation of wealthy landlords and merchants; and previous experience in central or provincial government, chairmanship of a municipal council and tests of standing such as membership of a university senate all qualified for a vote. Women were not entitled to vote at these elections.

The legislative assembly was given a minimum of 140 members, 105 elected, 25 officials and the remainder nominated non-officials. As in the Council of State communal representation secured the election of Moslems and other minorities. The franchise was on the provincial basis but with rather higher qualifications.

The action of the central legislature (as of the provincial governments) was limited by the powers entrusted to the Governor-General. If in any matter he judged that the safety and interest of British India would be affected, he was empowered to reject the advice of his council, and his personal decision became the action, or inaction, of the Government of India. He could dissolve either chamber, or extend its life; he could insist on the enactment of

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measures by certifying that they were "essential for the safety, tranquillity or interests of British India, or any part thereof"; he could restore grants refused by the assembly; he could on his sole initiative authorize expenditure by certification; he could withhold his consent to any Bill, central and provincial, or reserve it for His Majesty's pleasure; his previous sanction was necessary for the introduction of certain classes of provincial and central Bills; and on him rested the decision as to the items of central expenditure on which the central legislature could not vote. Finally, the Governor-General was empowered in a case of emergency, and without consulting the legislature, to rule by ordinance for not more than six months.

By the Act of 1919 the Governor-General remained statutorily responsible to the Imperial Parliament through the Secretary of State, a responsibility which extended in theory, though not of course in practice, even over the transferred provincial subjects. The Governor-General (and through him the provincial governments) was required to carry out the Secretary of State's orders. The ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the good government of India consequently remained unimpaired.

The Secretary of State was still advised by the Council of India, a body of from eight to twelve members who could only be removed from office by His Majesty on an address of both Houses of Parliament. The consent of a majority of the council was required for any grants or appropriations of Indian revenues, or for any change in the general conditions of service of the more important members of the principal Indian services.

Apart from the reforms the most important feature of recent Indian history consists of the political conditions in which the great constitutional experiment has been launched. The two factors to be considered are communalism and the attitude—generally speaking, of the politically-minded classes—towards the government.

Until commerce became the absorbing interest of Europe, wars on account of religion were not uncommon; and a rising such as the

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pilgrimage of grace in England and the covenanting movement in Scotland were born of the strength and sincerity of religious convictions. India remains to this day intensely religious; its faiths are the one dominating reality in the lives of its peoples; and in this lies the explanation of what are known as "communal disturbances."

The degeneration betrayed in the acts of impressionable young men forming the revolutionary and terrorist groups in India is as deplorable as it is tragic. Yet even this movement had its beginnings in the ideals expressed by Rabindranath Tagore. The impulse to recoil from excessive westernization and to revive the soul and the ancient culture of Hindu India lay at the root of the revolution in Bengal, prior to the temporary fusion of races and religions in the non-co-operation movement. These secret societies were exclusively recruited from among the educated Hindu middle classes; they contained neither Moslem nor peasant. Their original ideals were actually the essence of Gandhi's teaching and leadership. But Gandhi failed to realize that from the seeds of civil disobedience there would come a harvest of murder and anarchism.

The people of India are by nature law-abiding, but by the end of the war the country was in a dangerously unsettled state. The masses, though little interested in the political future, were suffering from a rise in prices and failure in the monsoon. Sikhs demoralized by the Ghadr<sup>1</sup> movement centred at San Francisco returned during the war and brought lawlessness, murder and attempted rebellion to the Punjab. The Moslem community, their loyalty strained by the hostilities against Turkey, saw in the coming terms of peace a danger to their religion and their holy places. Further, throughout political India a widespread mistrust in British promises and pledges had been deliberately created, "despite evidence of earnest effort to redeem them."<sup>2</sup>

Then, at the beginning of 1919, matters were brought to a head by the "Rowlatt Bills" introduced to deal with anarchy on the expiry

<sup>1</sup> *Ghadr* (Mutiny) was the name of a newspaper making a violent and seditious appeal especially to the Sikhs, started at San Francisco in September 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Surendranath Bannerjee, commenting on the political atmosphere on his return from England in September 1919, *A Nation in Making*, p. 333

of the Defence of India Act, war-time legislation equivalent to the British Defence of the Realm Act. Gandhi, popularly recognized as mahatma or great soul since his return from championing the cause of Indian settlers in South Africa, headed the opposition and began the first of his Indian "passive resistance" campaigns—the *Satyagraha*, or "soul-movement" of protest.

In the organized agitation that followed, the masses already discontented and unstable were inflamed by gross misrepresentations, and Hindus, Sikhs and Muhammadans joined hands for different reasons in a common enmity to the administration. Gandhi's followers had pledged themselves to abstain from injury to person or property. But the call for civil disobedience rapidly developed into uncontrolled excitement. Mob violence spread, especially in the Punjab and Gujarat, and this led in April to the tragedy of the Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar. The racial bitterness aroused was intense and lasting; and this was the atmosphere in which the reforms were inaugurated.

In 1920 Gandhi, carrying his Hindu followers with him, united himself with Maulana Muhammad Ali and his brother in the forefront of the Khilafat movement, which was the organized Moslem agitation over the Turkish peace terms. The whole of the opposition to the Administration was now definitely united; and there began the formidable agitation known as the non-co-operation movement, of which Gandhi with the support of Congress was the most prominent leader for the next two years.

But this alliance for a joint campaign in defiance of authority could not possibly last. The rising of the Moplahs (Muhammadans of the Malabar coast) in August 1921 had for its victims not only British officials but the Hindu community, including women. As a result Gandhi's Hindu followers were already showing marked distrust of his political wisdom before his arrest early in 1922, when the artificial coalition fell to pieces. Communal disturbances between Hindus and Moslems then broke out again. These have continued at intervals, into 1935, but the most ferocious outbreak occurred in March 1931 at Cawnpore. Congress proclaimed a strike as a protest against the execution of a convicted murderer.

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Communal riots followed, in which three hundred people were killed, many temples and mosques were desecrated or destroyed and a very large number of houses were burnt or pillaged.

Other movements subversive of law and order continued to give the government anxiety. From 1920 the reforming Sikh sect of the Akalis disturbed the Punjab until in 1925 this movement was settled with the help of moderate Sikh opinion.

Another movement to which reference must be made is the Muhammadan organization of the Red Shirts in the North-West Frontier Province. It was started by Abdul Ghaffar Khan of Utmanzai, claimed the support of Moslems on both sides of the border and was essentially hostile both to Hindu aspirations and to the British Government. In 1930 it grew so formidable as to bring Peshawar city for a time under mob control. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested in April but released a year later under the settlement made at Delhi between Lord Irwin, who was then Viceroy, and Mr. Gandhi. The Red Shirt movement revived and in August 1931 was formally affiliated to Congress "to get rid of the British." In December Abdul Ghaffar Khan was once more arrested and the movement waned.

Communist propaganda has existed in India since 1920 and would be a source of great danger were it to spread among the huge mass of illiterate peasantry and manual workers. But its teachings are contrary to the tenets of Hinduism and Islam and the Congress leaders are opposed to it. The Congress party is, however, divided. It has a Socialist wing of considerable strength and this may eventually split a party which relies upon the rich trading castes for its funds. Finally, among the subversive movements, murders by terrorists, which were particularly frequent in Bengal in 1930, still occur.

The Act of 1919 provided for a commission to inquire into the working of the new constitution in British India after a term of years, and to report whether the principle of responsible government should be extended, modified or restricted.<sup>1</sup> The Statutory Commission,

*The Simon Commission.*

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I p. xiii

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under Sir John Simon, with members representing the three political parties in England was appointed in November 1927. It paid two visits to India the last of them ending in April 1929.<sup>1</sup>

Its main recommendations were: Full responsible government in the Provinces; no responsibility of the executive to the legislature in the central government; the placing of the Army within the responsibility of the Governor-General advised by the commander-in-chief as representing the imperial authorities; that the control of the Secretary of State over the central government, but not over the provinces, was to be maintained; that measures should be adopted which would make the federation of British India and the States the ultimate goal; and that Burma should be separated from India.

The report was published in May 1930, and as it did not recommend responsible government at the centre, the report was very unfavourably received in India.

*Round Table  
Conference*

The period of enquiry was succeeded by one of consultation, first with Indian opinion, then with Parliament, the whole process resulting in the Government of India Act of 1935. As a sequel to the report of the Statutory Commission, whose chairman had urged the desirability of consulting with the States in relation to an All-India basis of government, the Round Table Conference met in London in November 1930. It was composed of delegates representing all three British political parties, the Indian States, the depressed classes, and other minorities. Congress was not represented at this session as it was actively engaged in the programme of civil disobedience which plunged India into a state of turmoil during that summer, and Gandhi and other leaders were in prison.

The States representatives immediately accepted the principle of Federation, provided that the federal centre was granted responsibility and that the powers to be surrendered to the federation met with the approval of the princes. The session ended in January 1931, when the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, announced: "With a legislature constituted on a federal basis, His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> Its valuable survey of Indian conditions is given in Vol. I. Vol. II, contains its recommendations, and the rest of the seventeen volumes comprise Reports and Memoranda of the Government of India, the India Office and the Provincial Governments.



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Government will be prepared to recognize the principle of the responsibility of the executive to the legislature."

By the Irwin-Gandhi pact of March 1931, Congress agreed to end non-co-operation and political boycott, the nationalist leaders were released, and Gandhi attended the second session of the Conference in September 1931 as the sole representative of Congress. The session was confronted with the communal controversy over the allocation of Moslem seats in the central and provincial governments. Failure to reach a settlement in India on the question of the allocation of seats (including those for the depressed classes) obliged the British Government to make its communal award, in respect to the provincial legislatures only, in August 1932 on the understanding that the award would be varied by an agreement among the communities. There was a subsequent modification in relation to the depressed classes.

The Round Table Conference ended in December 1932.<sup>1</sup> Congress was not represented at the third session as Gandhi had returned to India where he resumed non-co-operation, but with less popular support than before.

The British National Government then began to build up their scheme for constitutional reform in India. Committees sent out to examine the financial and franchise questions had reported in 1932. In March 1933 the "White Paper,"<sup>2</sup> embodying the greatest measure of agreement obtained in the three conferences, was issued. Parliament was consulted as to the suitability of the White Paper proposals as a basis for legislation, and agreed to send these to a joint committee to be examined from this point of view. In April a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee under the chairmanship of the Marquess of Linlithgow was appointed, which included all parties except the extreme right wing. The process of consultation with Indian opinion was continued by calling upon delegates from the Indian States and from British India to attend and give their views.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Zetland's account of the Conference is given in *Political India*, Ch. XV. The Proceedings of the first Session are recorded in Cmd. 3722 of 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform*, Cmd. 4268 of 1933. For an analysis see *India, the White Paper*, Sir J. P. Thompson (Macmillan), 1933.

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The Joint Select Committee's Report<sup>1</sup> was published in 1934; and the Government was authorized by Parliament to introduce a Bill on its lines, which followed the main features of the White Paper proposals.

The Bill which was published on 24th January 1935 was piloted through the Commons by Sir Samuel Hoare, and through the House of Lords by the Marquess of Zetland, who at that point succeeded him as Secretary of State. The Bill passed both Houses by large majorities, the opposition for conflicting reasons being Labour and right-wing Conservatives. It received the Royal Assent on the 2nd August 1935. On the 2nd August 1858, the Act had been passed which brought India under the British Crown and Parliament.

Put shortly, the Act is a definite step towards the ultimate goal of "a position analogous to that of the other Dominions."<sup>2</sup> It increases the powers of the provinces to manage their own affairs; and it provides for the establishment of an All-India federation by linking the British Indian provinces in a federal system with those Indian States prepared to enter the federation by the voluntary act of their rulers. Burma and Aden (on certain conditions) are to be separated from India.

The reformed constitution applies to the existing Governor's provinces and to the two new provinces of Sind and Orissa. Until the passing of the Act, the Governor-General in council and the central legislature exercised an authority throughout the whole of the provinces. The provinces have been given a unitary government under a Governor, appointed by the King and advised by a council of ministers. The ministers are not officials and they are responsible to an elected Legislature empowered to legislate over the whole field of provincial authority. The administration of backward tracts and certain other matters are solely in the hands of the Governor who is given a "special responsibility" for the protection of minorities, the rights of the public services, the prevention of commercial discrimination,

<sup>1</sup> Vol I Part I Report: Vol I. Part II. Proceedings: H.C. 5 of 1934: Evidence H.C. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India (House of Lords, 1st July 1935).

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the protection of the rights of any Indian State, and the execution of orders by the Governor-General on such matters as federal reserved subjects. The Governor is also responsible for the prevention of any grave menace to the peace of his province, and while the general control of "law and order" has been transferred to Indian ministers the Governor of a province has been empowered to act against his ministers' advice should this be necessary to ensure tranquillity. Safeguards have also been provided to protect the police forces from any suspicion of political influence or pressure, and to preserve the secrecy of the records of the branches engaged in fighting terrorism. The Governor has the right to preside over his ministers' meetings; and for the discharge of his special responsibilities he has been empowered to secure legislation and also to restore in the annual appropriation of revenue any sums originally included by him as necessary under his special responsibilities if such sums have been reduced or rejected by the Legislature. In emergencies the Governor, with the consent of the Governor-General, may issue ordinances having the force of law, valid for six months, but renewable, if placed before Parliament, for a further six months. Should the Constitution break down the Governor can take over as much of the administration as he considers necessary. In the exercise of his special powers the Governor would act in responsibility to the Governor-General, and through him to the Secretary of State and Parliament.

Upper and Lower Houses are established by the Act in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the United Provinces, Bihar, and Assam, the other provinces being given single-chamber legislatures. The Upper Houses, or legislative councils, will be permanent bodies, from which one-third of the numbers will retire every third year. The life of the legislative assemblies is fixed at five years. The composition of the legislatures has been based upon the communal award of 1932 as modified by the Poona Pact.<sup>1</sup> This recognizes the principle of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gandhi considered that the award made an artificial division between caste Hindus and the depressed classes and imposed upon himself a "fast unto death" in protest. The two communities hastened to make the agreement known as the Poona Pact (25th September 1932) which was accepted by the British Government. By this the Depressed Classes abandoned the principle of separate electorates

separate electorates for the Moslem, Sikh, Indian Christian, Anglo-Indian and European communities, with special seats for women, landlords, industry, universities and labour, and provides a detailed allocation of seats in each legislative assembly: a principle which has been extended to cover the legislative councils.

On the recommendations of the franchise committee the electorate of the eleven provinces has been enlarged from 7,000,000 (including 315,000 women) to 29,000,000 men and 6,000,000 women, an increase of from 3 per cent. to 14 per cent. of the population. Provincial election is direct.

Provincial autonomy necessitated the strengthening of the central government, and for this the Act has provided by an All-India federation of the States and the Provinces of British India. This brings the States which agree to participate into constitutional relationship with British India. But the authority of the federation when established will not be equal in the States and provinces, for the princes are not prepared to delegate as full powers to the federation as obtained in the case of the provinces. Federation will be established by Royal Proclamation after the princes representing at least half the total population of the States and entitled to at least half the seats allotted to the States in the federal Upper Chamber have executed an instrument of accession in which the powers to be delegated are set out. The rights of paramountcy over the Indian States could not be exercised by any federal authority. Consequently, outside the subjects voluntarily surrendered by the princes to federal legislation, the States' relations with the Crown remain as before, the Viceroy<sup>2</sup> exercising the powers of Agent of the Crown.

Under the Act of 1919 the central executive government was responsible to the Secretary of State and Parliament. In the new Constitution the executive power and authority of the federation, including the supreme military command, vests in the Governor-General. For the "key" for the reservation of nearly double their original allotment of seats, the candidates for which must be chosen at a primary election by depressed class voters only.

<sup>2</sup> The office of Viceroy is constituted as a separate appointment under letters patent, but it must invariably be held by the Governor-General.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

subjects of defence, foreign affairs and matters connected with the Christian churches which are reserved for his own control (together with the administration of British Baluchistan), the Governor-General is responsible to the Secretary of State and Parliament. For the administration of these reserved subjects the Governor-General will have three counsellors, who cannot be members of the council of ministers. He is also empowered to appoint a financial adviser to assist him.

The council of ministers have charge of all except the reserved departments. It is the intention of the Act that the Governor-General should select his ministers in consultation with the person who, in his judgment, commands the largest following in the legislature, and to include as far as possible members of important minority communities and representatives of the States-members of the federation. In this way the Parliamentary idea of the responsibility of ministers will, it is hoped, be developed. Joint deliberation between the council of ministers and the counsellors administering the reserved departments is to be encouraged.

The Governor-General is charged with special responsibilities similar to those laid upon the provincial Governors. He can issue ordinances concerning them and he can reject the advice of his ministers if, in his opinion, such advice endangers these interests. He has also been given powers to take over the whole administration in the event of a breakdown of the Constitution.

The federal legislature is to consist of two chambers, the Upper House or Council of State and the Lower House or Legislative Assembly. The Council of State will have a maximum of 260 members. Of these 104 would be chosen by the princes to represent nearly 600 Indian States, and six will be non-officials nominated by the Governor-General with fourteen seats reserved for minor communities. Election of British-Indian members to the Council of State is to be direct, with separate communal electorates in certain cases and under a franchise qualification.<sup>1</sup> The Council of State will be

<sup>1</sup> In 1931 there were 256½ millions in British India (excluding Burma), an area of 818,000 square miles, Bengal alone then had a population of nearly 50 millions and is 78,000 square miles in extent as compared with 45 millions in

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

permanent, with one-third of the members retiring every third year in rotation. The legislative assembly is to consist of not more than 375 members, of whom 250 would represent British India and 125 the adherent States. The legislative assembly will be indirectly elected (as regards British India) by the members of provincial legislatures, on a communal basis. The life of the Lower House will be for five years. Joint sittings of the two chambers can be held in certain cases by the direction of the Governor-General.

The Governor-General and the provincial Governors in India and the Secretary of State are given special responsibilities to safeguard the interests of the 2000 British personnel at present in the All-India services. Recruitment by the Secretary of State will continue for the Indian civil service, the police and the civil branch of the Indian medical service.

The Act establishes a Federal Court whose jurisdiction will include the interpretation of the Constitution Act and the interpretation of federal laws; and the Court will hear appeals in regard to these from the high court of any lower court. Appeals can be made from the federal court to the Privy Council. Procedure in criminal cases remains unaltered.

The keynote to commercial treatment as regards British trade interests is reciprocity; and laws which may restrict the right of entry of foreigners into India shall not apply to British subjects domiciled in the United Kingdom.

The administration of Indian railways, subject to the general control over policy of the Federal Legislature and Government, is to be vested in a statutory railway authority working on business principles.

The Indian legislatures are not empowered to revise the Constitution, and any future modifications recommended by an Indian Legislature can only be made by Order in Council to which both Houses of Parliament have assented.

The Act entirely alters the position of India at Geneva. Instead of Indian representatives at the League of Nations being appointed Great Britain, which has an area of 89,000 square miles. An existing Madras constituency has its 25,000 voters scattered amidst a population of 6,000,000 over an area of 31,000 square miles; and its representative takes 60 hours to travel by rail to Delhi and 78 to Simla (see *Ind. Stat. Com. Report*, Vol. I. pp. 221, 222).

## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

and instructed by the Secretary of State, under the new Constitution, the Governor-General will appoint these delegates. Only in so far as the Secretary of State exercises control over the Governor-General will the India Office in future be able to determine what instructions may in future be given to the representatives of India.

The powers of the Secretary of State are nearly all transferred to the Government of India by the Act. The Secretary of State is accordingly to be provided with an advisory council of not more than six or less than three members, at least half of whom must have held office for ten years under the Crown in India. The only powers which the council can exercise is the approval of all rules affecting the conditions of service of members of the public services in India, as long as the Secretary of State is charged with control of them.

One of the conditions upon which federation depends is the establishment on a sound basis and free from political influence, of a reserve bank, provided for by the Reserve Bank Act of 1934. This is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of India's financial stability and credit. It is essential that the budgetary position of the country is assured, that the provinces are all financially solvent, that the short-term debt both in India and in London (as it existed in 1932) is substantially reduced, adequate reserves accumulated and that India's normal export surplus is restored. Any amendment of the Reserve Bank Act or of the coinage or currency of the federation will require the prior sanction of the Governor-General.

The allocation of budget funds as between the central government and the provinces has proved difficult, since these adjustments had to be made in 1920, and this matter will be reviewed before the Act comes into force.

The Indo-British experiment embodied in the Act of 1935 is the definite relaxation of direct administrative control by a Western race over an Oriental people. By the new constitution, when it is fully established, more than five hundred autocracies, great and small, will be linked up with the eleven autonomous provinces of British India. By an adjustment of powers Great Britain, British India and Indian India will be associated by federation in governing

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the 337,000,000 people of varied races and creeds in the sub-continent. The reforms aim at a compromise between Hindu and Moslem moderate opinion and are a mean between the views of the various political parties in Parliament. British-Indian politicians consider that progress (including the Indianization of the Indian Army) is too slow, and this has influenced their reception of the Act, particularly in the case of Indian Liberals. The right-wing of Congress seem to be less unfavourable; and the Justice party and the Congress party of Madras are more interested in social and democratic questions than in Nationalism. The partnership between East and West will work if Indian statesmen use their authority wisely and moderately; and the reserve powers given by the Act to the Governor-General and to the provincial Governors will not then be necessary. Should a breakdown unfortunately occur, the machinery exists by which control can be re-established.

The Constitution comes into force in British India in 1937, with Lord Linlithgow as the first constitutional Governor-General and Viceroy, in succession to Lord Willingdon, whose Viceroyalty has been marked by sympathy and balanced judgment. Provincial autonomy will then be established, with a transitional central government until a Federation comes into existence.

Fiscal autonomy, one of the main points of the national programme, came with constitutional progress.<sup>1</sup> The *Tariff Reform*. Joint Select Committee on the Montagu-Chelmsford report took the view that India should have the same liberty to consider her fiscal interests as Great Britain and the Dominions, provided that international and Empire obligations were safeguarded; and the Secretary of State accepted the principle that the Government of India should have the right to make its own tariff arrangements in the interests of its own citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Since then the Indian legislature has established a system of "discriminating protection" with the object of "rapid industrialization." In 1923-24 a Tariff Board was set up, and in 1926 the special

<sup>1</sup> For earlier British-Indian tariff policies see pp. 547, 553-555.

<sup>2</sup> Reply to a Lancashire deputation 3rd March 1921; and dispatch 30th June 1921 (*Ind. Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I. p. 356).



## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

protection previously given to Lancashire cotton was abolished. In 1930 the Indian legislature took action to save the Bombay cotton mills, then threatened with ruin. The general duty on cotton goods was raised from 11 to 15 per cent., notwithstanding the earnest representations of the British Government. At the same time an additional protective duty was levied on all cotton piece-goods imported from elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The iron and steel industry represented by the Tata enterprises at Jamshedpur is now heavily protected. The legislative assembly is strongly protectionist, and the nationalist extremists are opposed to the principle of preference, but the height of the existing customs duties is for revenue to enable the Indian Government to balance its budget. Yet whatever may be said for the Indian tariff, much of it cannot benefit the agriculturist.<sup>2</sup>

The most striking feature of the Ottawa Conference, assembled to stimulate Empire trade and reduce internal customs barriers, was the participation of representatives of Indian commerce and industry. By free negotiation these delegates acted on the principle of imperial preference as between India and the rest of the empire. The preferences granted to Great Britain are considerable, and in the case of cotton goods it is broadly true to say that while the import duties on British cotton goods are 25 per cent., the rate for other countries is at least 50 per cent.<sup>3</sup> By the Act of 1935, the Governor-General can exercise special powers in the case of any tariff measure designed to penalize British trade, but it is on the goodwill of the Indian people that the prosperity of commerce between Britain and India in the future will rest.

The overwhelming predominance of agriculture and the prevailing poverty of the masses explain why Indian revenues are so largely derived from land and from taxes on consumption, the chief sources of State revenue from time immemorial. The self-sufficiency of the Indian villages has limited the scope of internal excises to a few articles, such as salt, kerosene oil, alcoholic liquors, for which the rural areas are dependent on outside supply.

<sup>1</sup> *Modern India*, Ch. XIV., by Lord Meston.

<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Stat. Com. Report*, Vol. I. p. 335.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Zetland (Secretary of State for India), House of Lords, 9th July 1935.

Tobacco, which figures so largely in the budgets of Great Britain, is grown in many of the villages and smoked by the inhabitants, which has precluded the levy of an excise upon this article. Income tax has never, since its introduction in 1860, been the important source of revenue which it is in western industrialized countries.

The great disparity between the incomes of different classes in India is most striking, and it is accompanied by a grave inequality in the distribution of taxation. The big landholder in areas where "permanent settlement" prevails, owns extensive estates for which he may pay to the State a merely nominal charge fixed more than a century ago, and declared to be unalterable for ever, while his agricultural income is totally exempt from income tax. There are, moreover, no death duties in India. At the other end of the scale the poor cultivator not only pays to the State a substantial portion of his income from land, but also bears the burden of the duties on sugar, kerosene oil, salt, and other articles of general consumption.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1914 the defence forces of India<sup>2</sup> have been reduced by 55,000 men and the fighting troops now number 183,000 of all arms, of which just under 60,000 are British.<sup>3</sup> This heavy reduction is to some extent balanced by the employment of the air arm, armoured cars, light tanks and other modernization; and India today spends a smaller proportion of her revenues on Defence than she did twenty years ago. The army in India has to deal with an altogether abnormal set of conditions, and these in the interests of the peace and security of the country weigh against the possibility of further reduction.

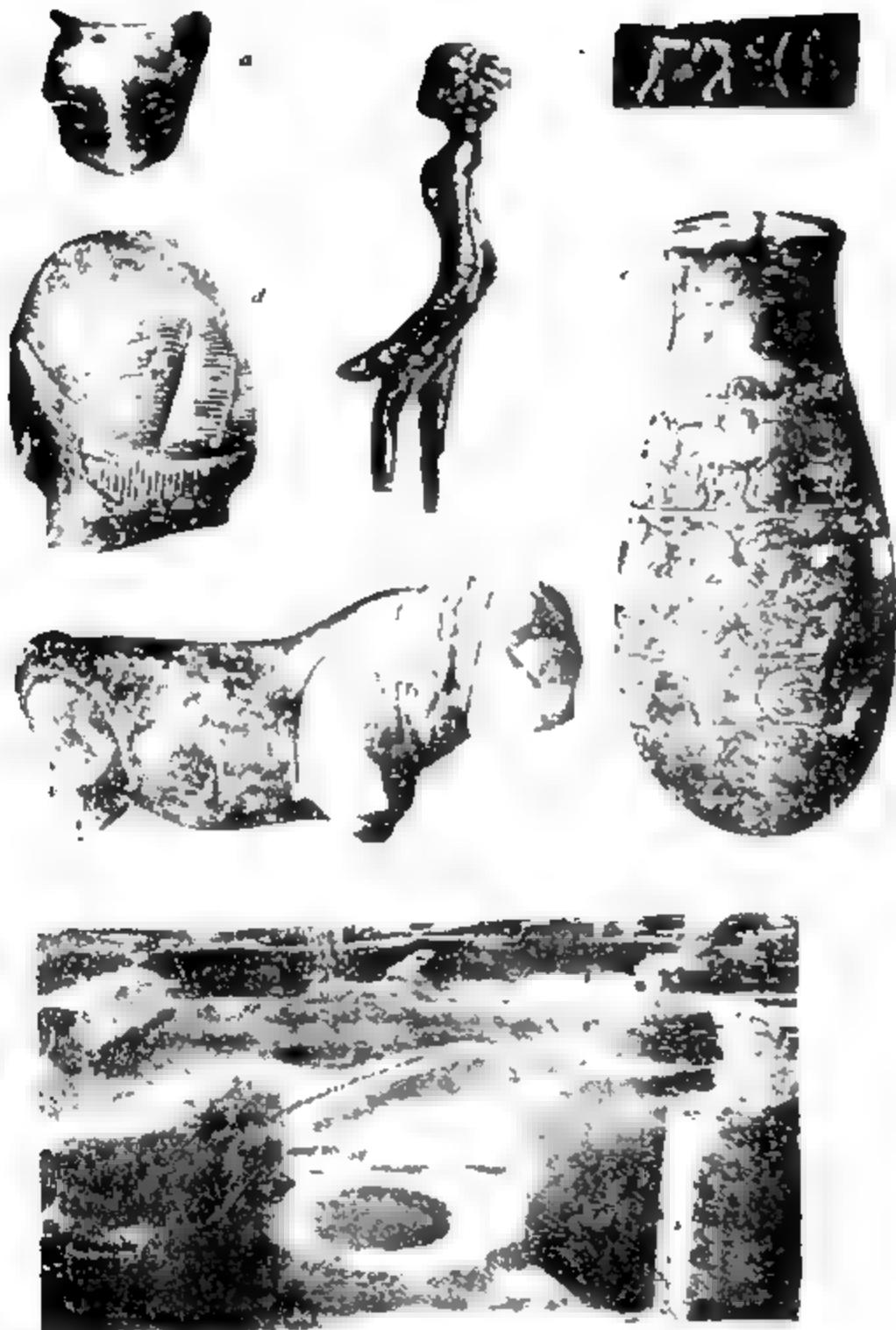
The frontier may first be considered. The war-like tribes across the north-western border possess at least 250,000 rifles. The campaign of 1919-20 in Waziristan was the most desperate and costly in the whole history of the frontier.<sup>4</sup> In 1930-31, 47,000 troops had to be employed against the Red Shirts and the Khajuri

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Statutory Com. Report*, pp. 334-35.

<sup>2</sup> For post-war organization see *The Army in India and its Evolution*. (Govt. Printing Press, Calcutta, 1924.)

<sup>3</sup> Excluding 2000 R.A.F. Figures as given in 1933.

<sup>4</sup> See *Waziristan 1919-1920*, H. de Wetteville, 1925.



FROM THE EXCAVATIONS AT MOHENJO-DARO

(a) Cat's head, (b) seal, (c) bronze figurine of woman  
(d) woman's head (e) painted pottery jar (f) bison (g) house

From "Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization," by Sir John Marshall,  
copyright by the Government of India, reproduced by courtesy of  
Mr. Arthur Probstmann



BRONZE GROUP REPRESENTING SIVA, UMA AND SKANDA

Southern India, eleventh century

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington, etc.*



a TYPE OF DRavidIAN HEAD

A Kota from Nilgiri Hills

*By permission of the Secretary of State for*

TYPE OF RAJPUT OR ARYAN HEAD

*By permission of Indian Ruler, Bikaner*

PLATE IV.



TOY MODEL OF VILLAGE BARBER IN TERRA-COTTA

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) WOMAN MILLING FLOUR

*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*

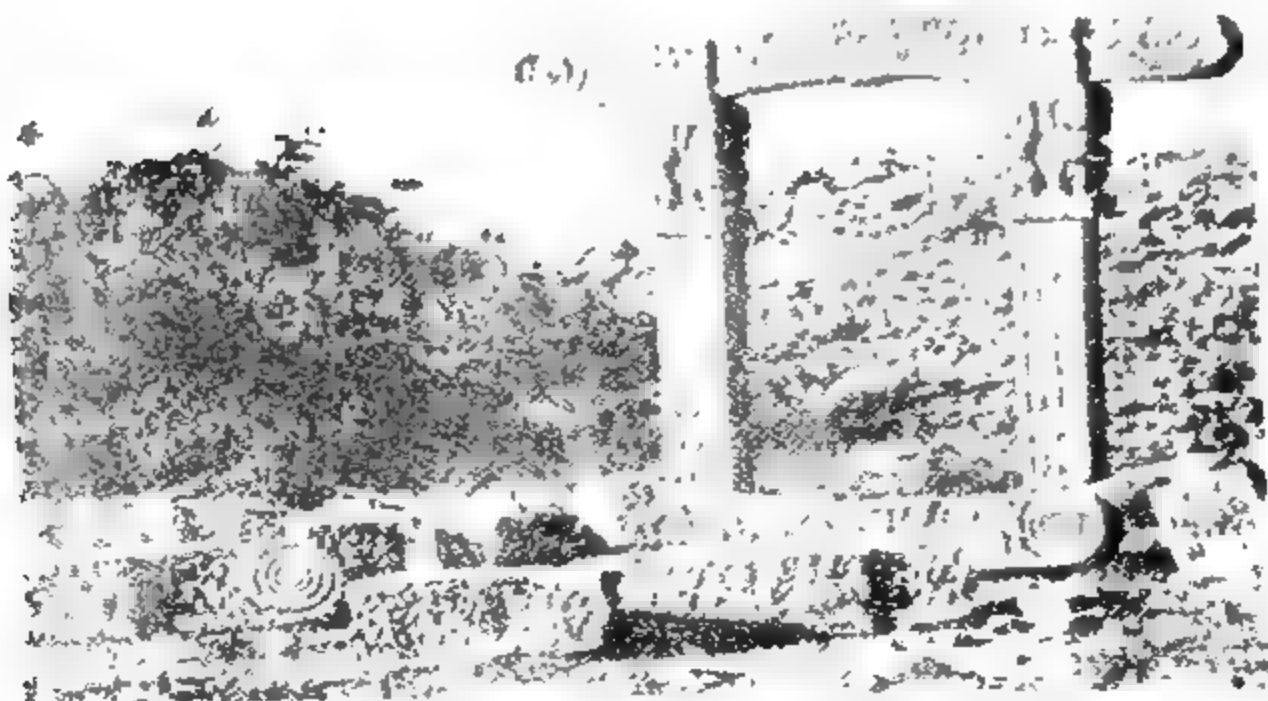


REDUCTIO CHALCIVOLINICINUS



a FROM THE GANDHARA FRIEZE SHOWING  
A BIRTH STORY OF BUDDHA

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



b SANCHI STUPA WITH STONE POST AND RAIL

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



a)



b)



(a) COIN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

(b) POROS MEDAL, THE OBVERSE SHOWING CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF WARFARE.

*By courtesy of the British Museum*



(c) CAPITAL FOR PILLAR c. A.D. 50 OVER RELICS OF BUDDHA AT MATHURA

*By courtesy of the British Museum*



ASHOKA PILLAR

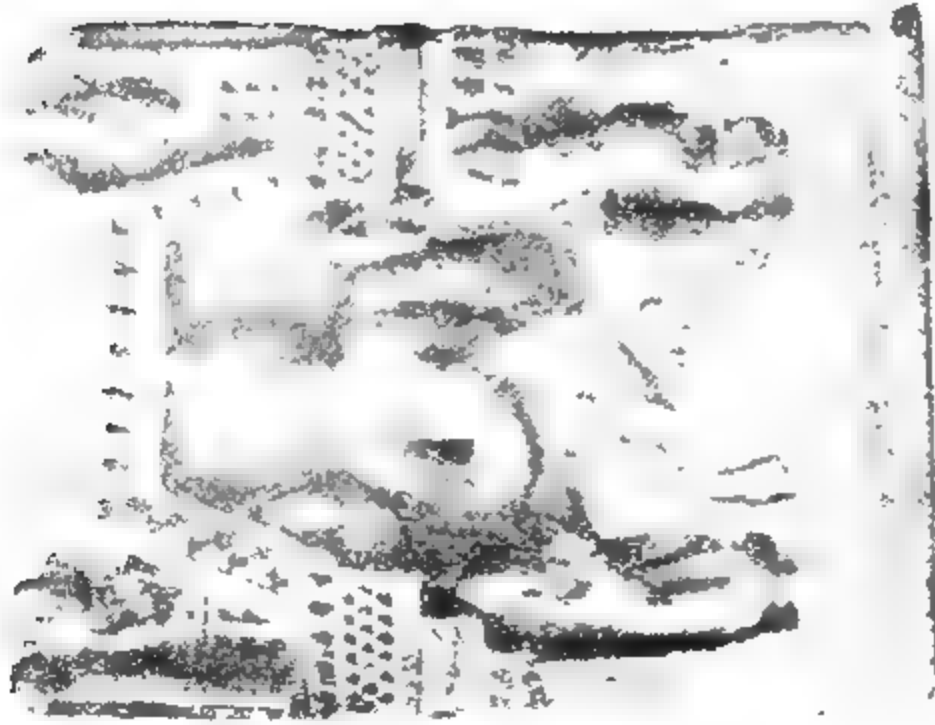
*Delhi, India. Photographed by the Secretary of State for India in Council*

PLATE IX.



IRON PILLAR AT DELHI

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) EARLY BAS RELIEF FIGURE OF BUDDHA  
(IN TALCHOSE SCHIST, GRAECO-BUDDHIST

From the Malakand

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) HEAD OF BODHISATVA,  
GRAECO-BUDDHIST

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



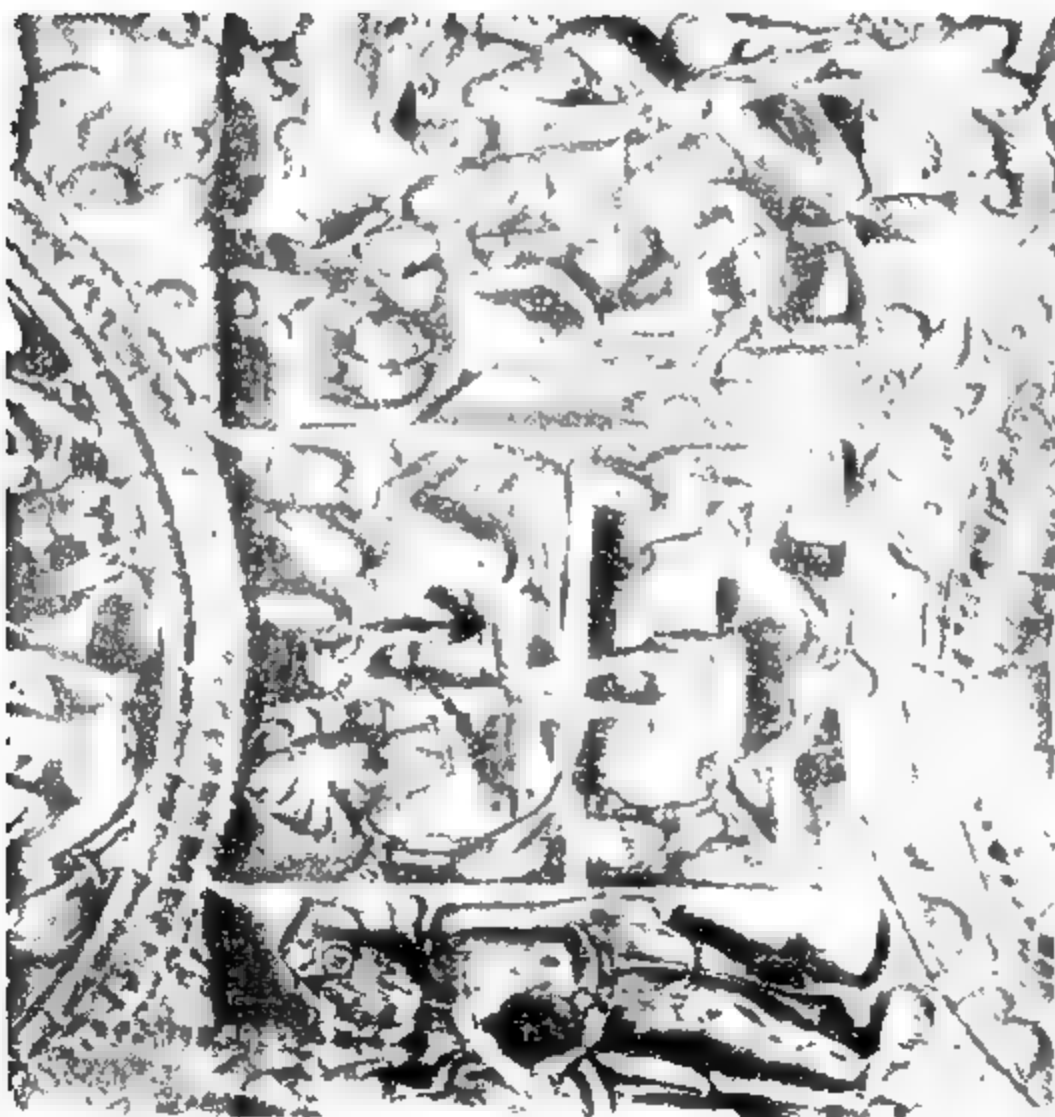
“RID-SANDSTON” FIGURES  
FROM MATHURA

Earliest Kushan and second century AD  
By *University of India, Mathura*



THE VIEW OF BUDDHA IN RED  
SANDSTONE

Madura, near Hellenic fifth century AD  
By *University of India, Mathura*



a, AMARAVATI BAS RELIEFS GUPIA

*By courtesy of the British Museum*



(b) DETAIL FROM AMARAVATI  
BAS RELIEF (GUPTA)

*By courtesy of the British Museum*

PLATE XIII.



Fresco from Ajanta Cave.

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington.*



TEMPLE AT KHAJURAHO

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*





(a) BLIND DRUMMER IN MOSQUE  
*By courtesy of Indian Railways Board*



(b) DOOR OF QUEEN'S TOMB AHMADABAD  
Muhammadan  
*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*

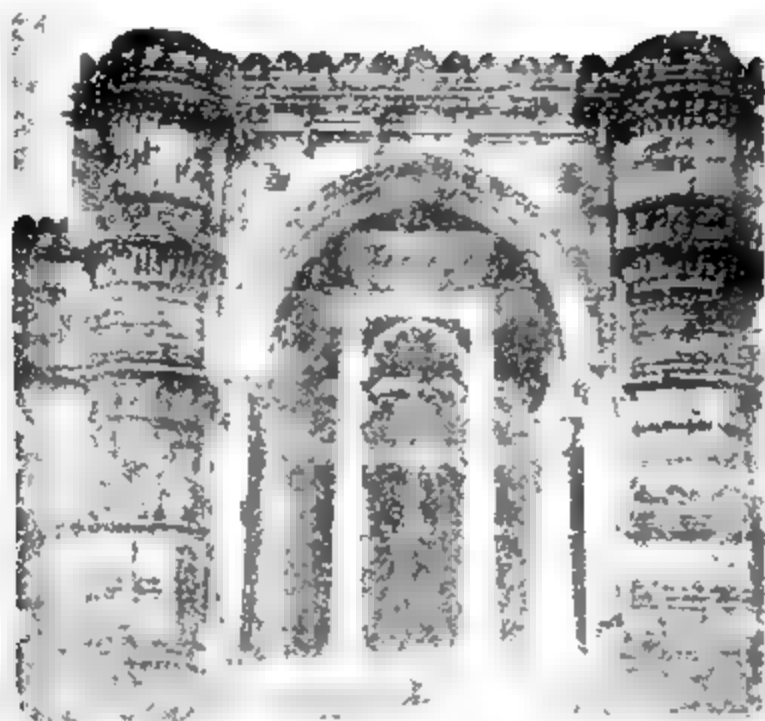


SCULPTURED FRIEZE FROM SIVA-DURGA TEMPLE.  
AT HALEBID

Hoysala Dynasty, thirteenth century

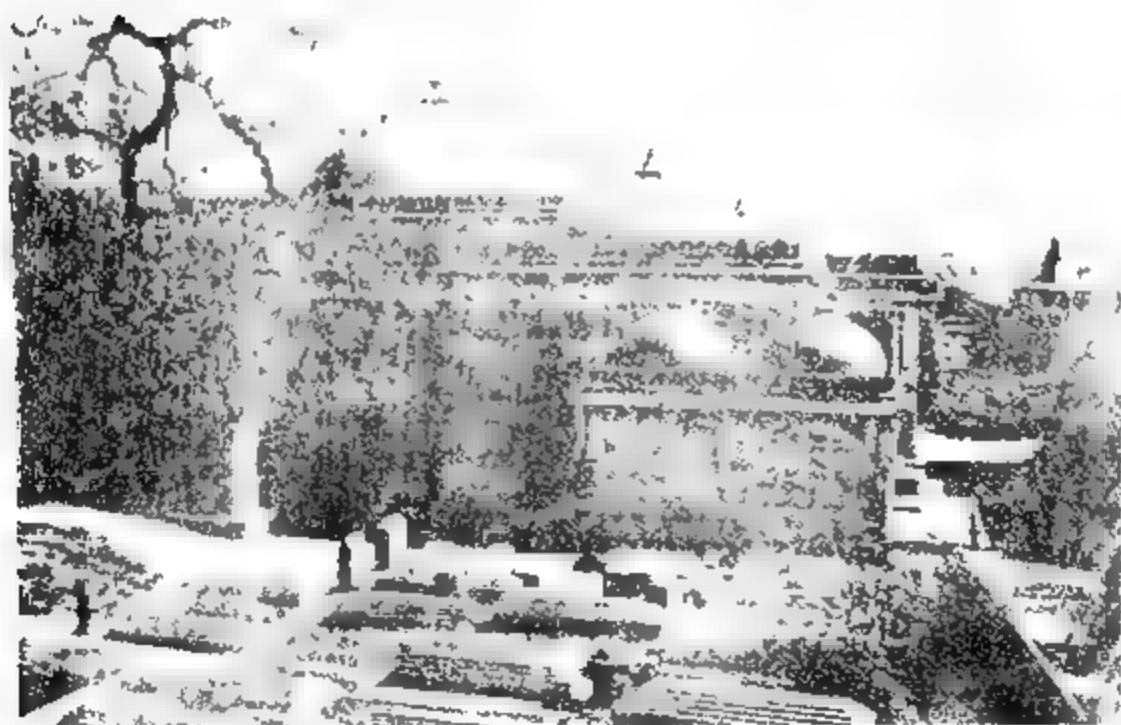
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*

PLATE XVII



THE JAMA MASJID, AHMEDABAD

*By permission of the Government of India*



AHMAD'S TOMB, AHMEDABAD

*By permission of the Government of India*



MURAL CARVING TEMPLE TOASTINI AT SUJYANAGAR  
Painted by Hon. J. J. ...

PLATE XIX.



IN THE RICHMOND  
HILL, N. Y.



INDIAN SHIPPING: 'HIGH VESSELS OF THE PERSIAN GULF,' PEARL  
FISHERS' GRABS AND CATAMARANS

From "Les Hindous" French early nineteenth-century work



a. ALALA DEVI MOSQUE, JAUNPUR

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India, 1904.*



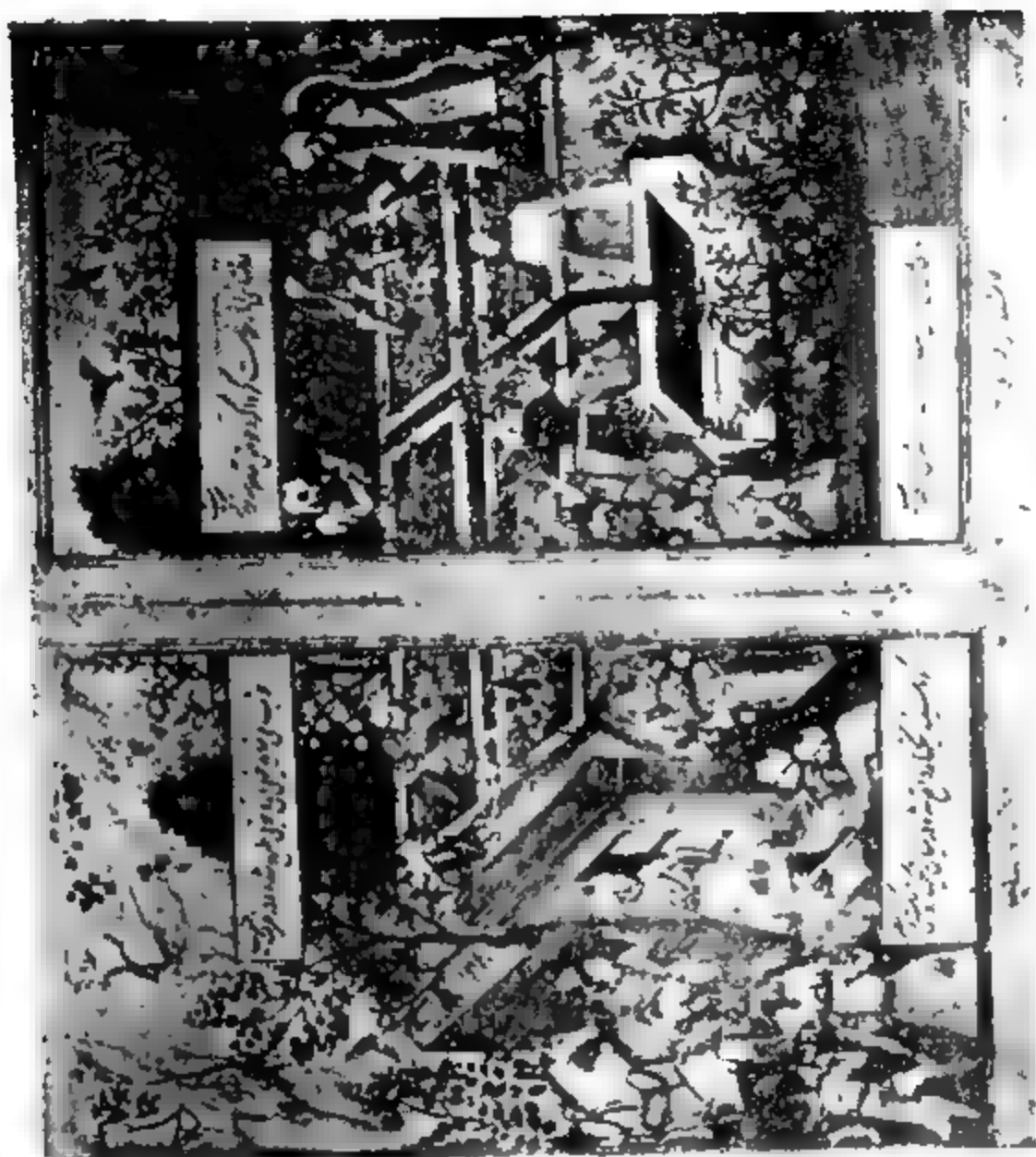
b. TIMUR

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India, 1904.*



THE COURT OF THE EMPEROR BABAR  
*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*





BABAR LAYING OUT A GARDEN IN AGR A

Painted by Bishandas and Nanda

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*

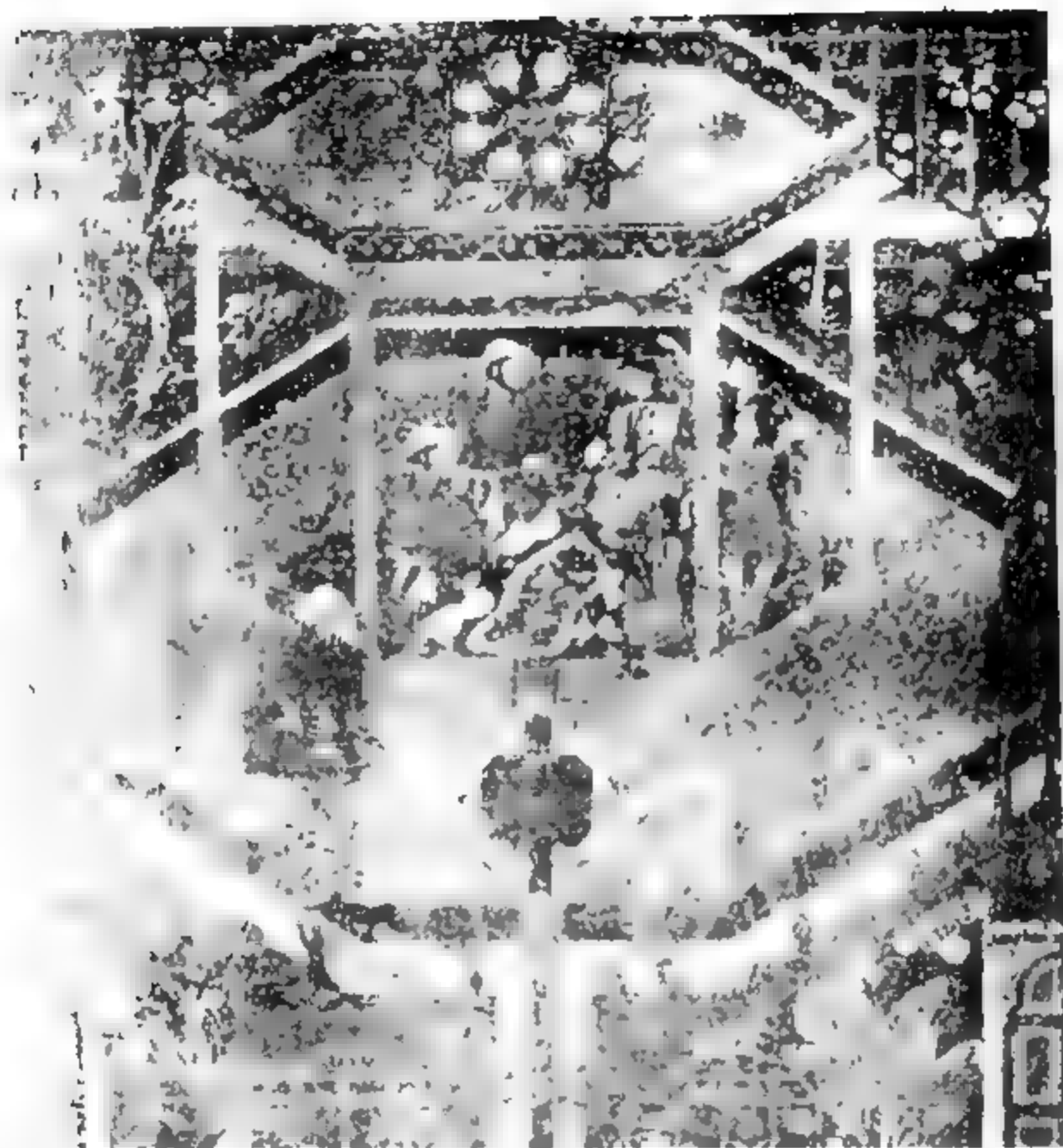


ILLUSTRATION FROM A MS. BOOK  
Mogul School of Humayun, sixteenth century  
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



AKBAR HUNTING

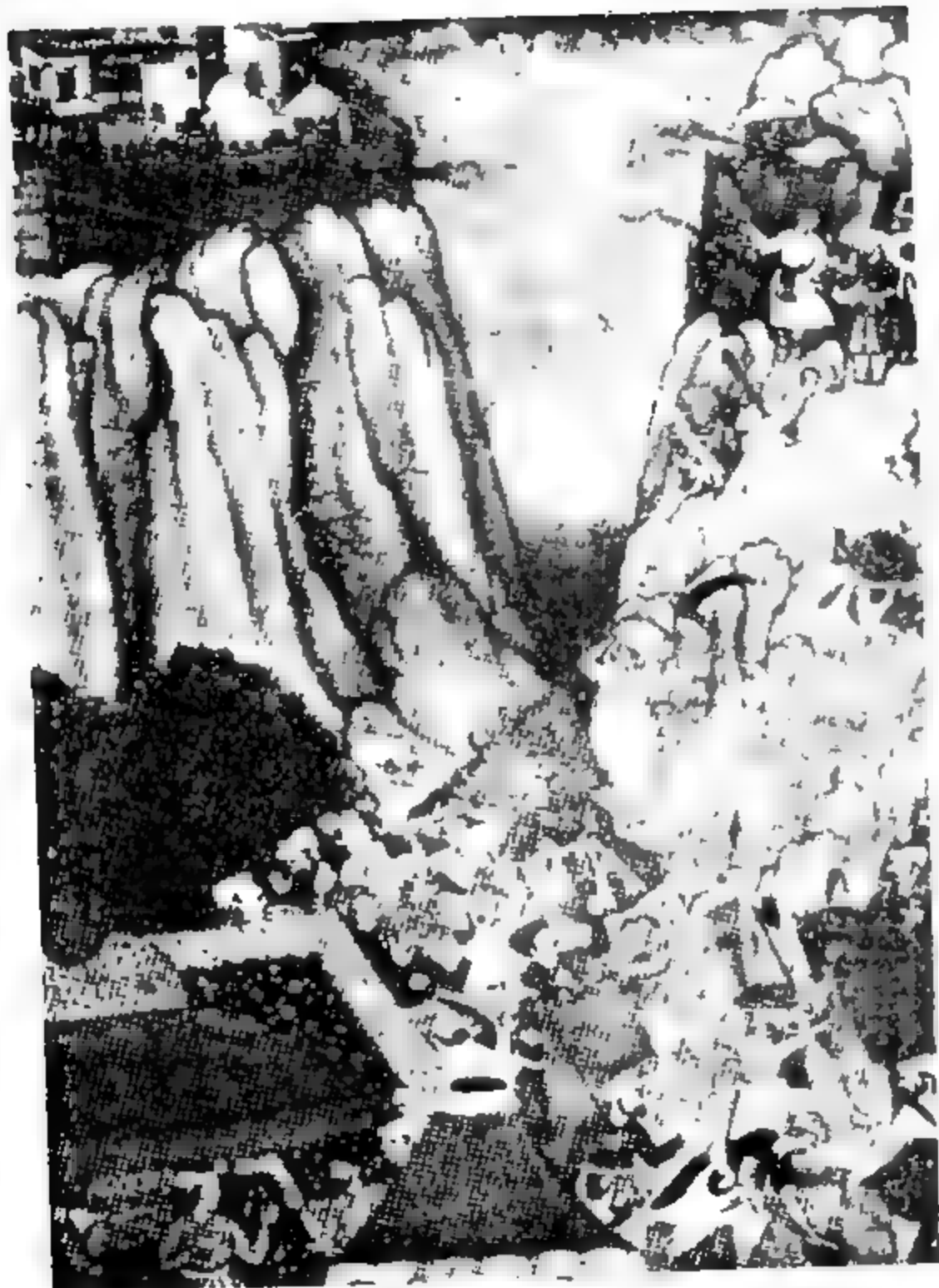
Mogul School, showing European influence in its perspective

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



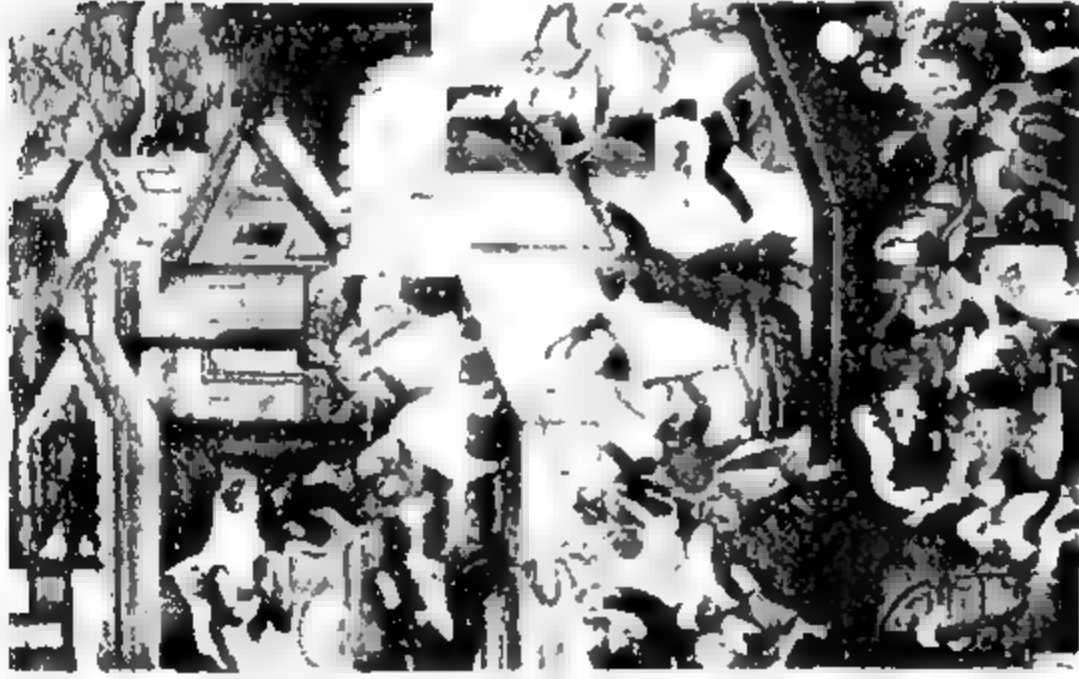
RAJPUT PALACE AT DATIA. EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

*By permission of the Secretary, Archaeological Survey of India in Council*



**AKBAR DIRECTING THE ASSAULT ON RANTHAMBOR 1568**

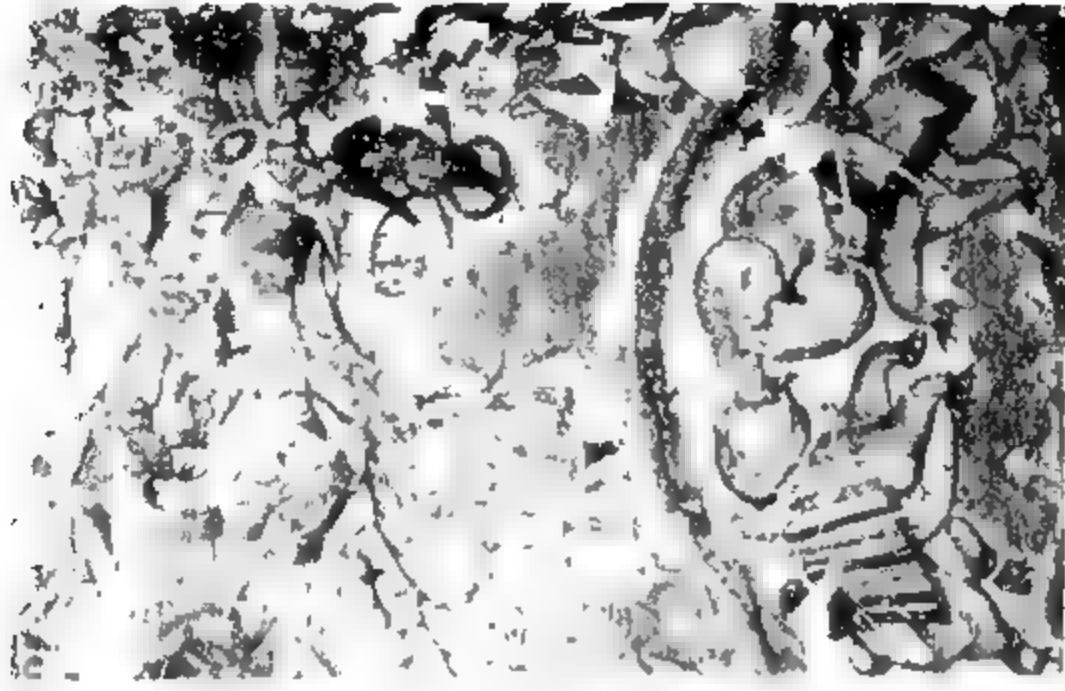
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) REJOICINGS AT THE BIRTH OF  
PRINCE SALIM

From the "Ain-i-Akbari." Artists : Kisir  
the elder and Dham Das

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) AKBAR RECEIVING THE NEWS OF THE  
BIRTH OF PRINCE MURAD WHILE WATCHING  
AN ELEPHANT FIGHT

From the "Ain-i-Akbari." Artists : Farrukh  
Beg and Basawan

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) A KASHMIR VALLEY  
*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*



(b) ABU-L-FAZL



(c) AKBAR

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



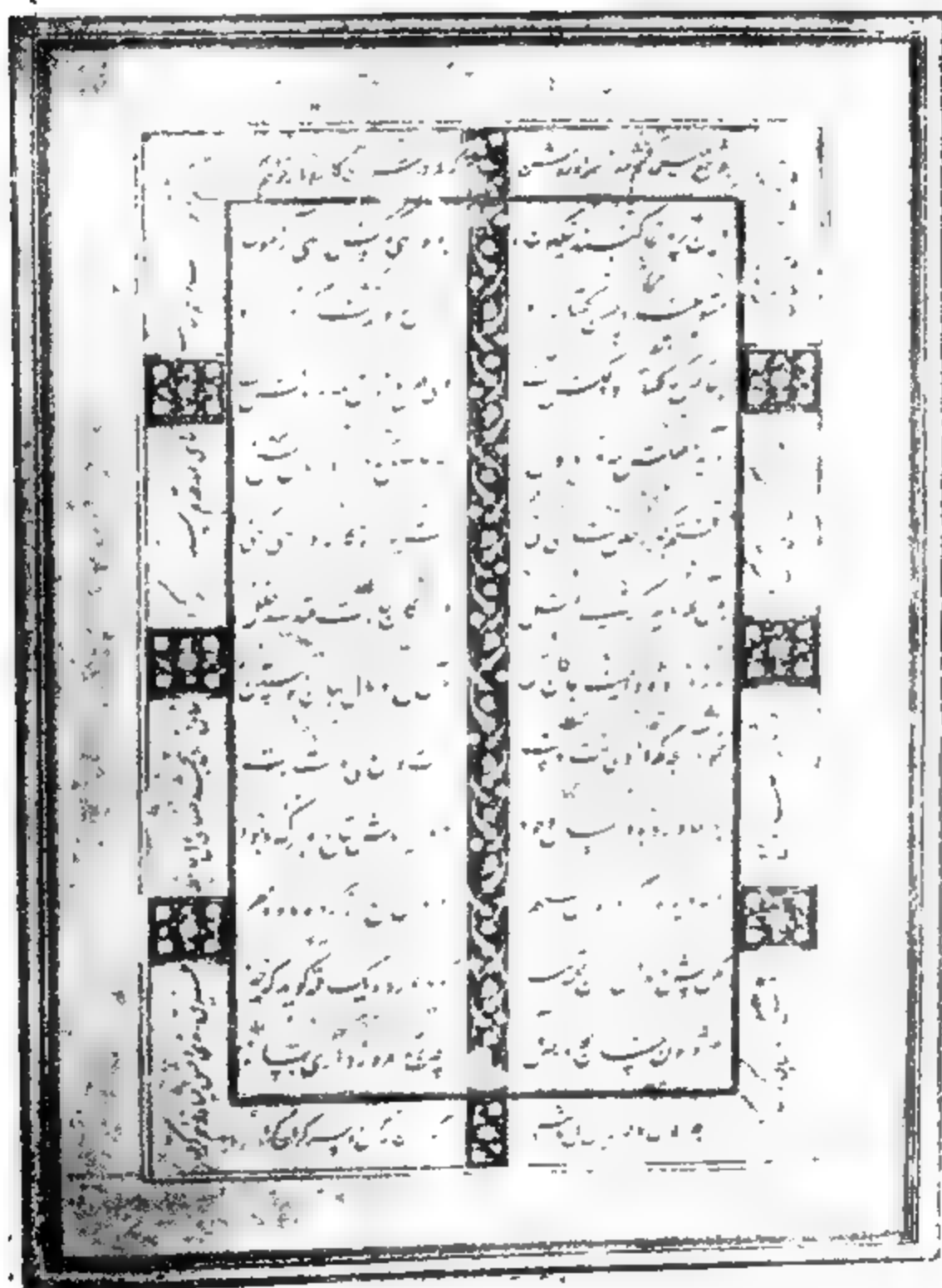
(b) DANCING GIRLS PERFORMING  
BEFORE A GRANDEE

*By permission of the Secretary of State for  
India in Council*

(a) MUSICIANS  
North India, Mogul Period  
*By permission of the Secretary of State  
for India in Council*





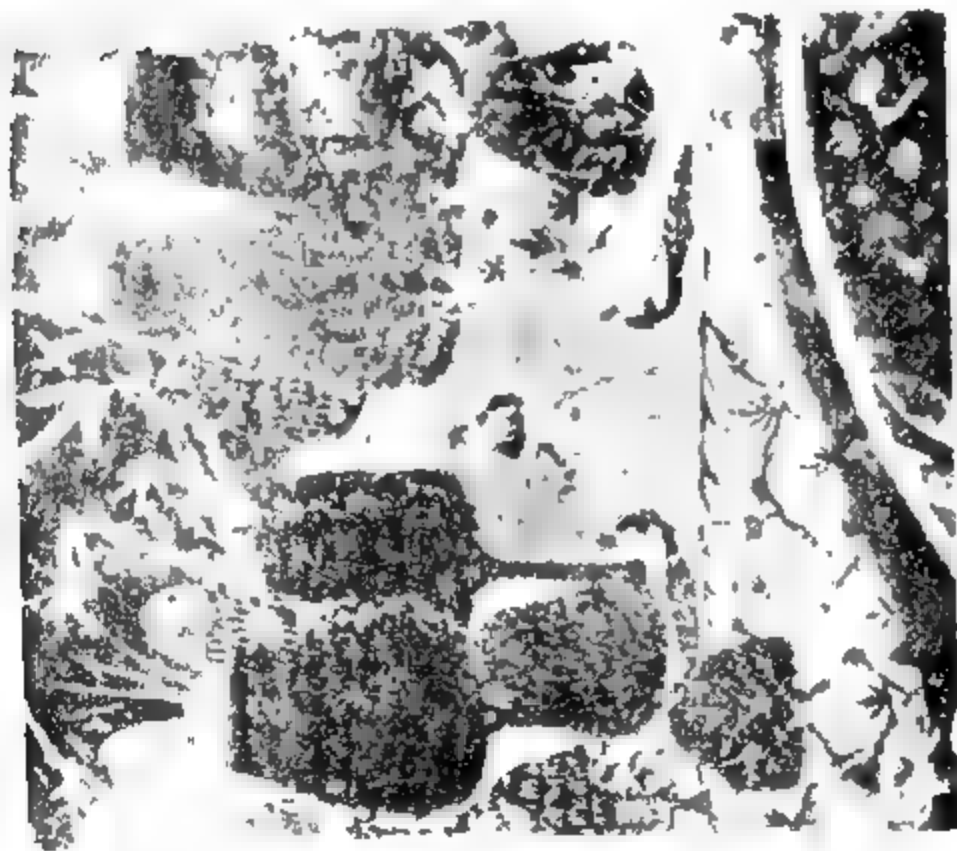


CALIGRAPHY BY MIR ALI OF HERAT

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) THE PRINCE AT THE WELL  
Rajput Painting, eighteenth century  
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) GIRL IN GARDEN WITH PEACOCK  
Rajput Tempera Painting, seventeenth century  
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) PLOUGHING WITH BUTTOCKS

*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*



(b) THE VILLAGE POTTER

*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*



FISHERMEN

From "Les Hindous," French early nineteenth-century work  
*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



a A GOLDSMITH

*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*



b SALT PANS IN SOUTHERN INDIA

*By courtesy of Indian Railways Bureau*

**PLATE XXXVI.**



**STENCILLED COTTON CLOTH**

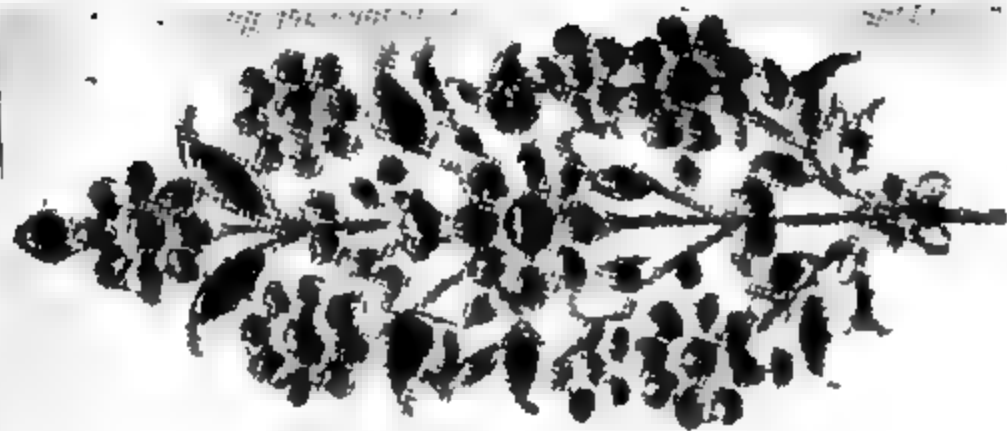
From Rajputana, eighteenth century

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) MOGUL JEWELLED TURBAN  
ORNAMENT, XVIIth CENTURY

*By courtesy of Indian Museum,  
South Kensington*



(b) RAJPUT JEWELLED TURBAN  
ORNAMENT, XVIIth CENTURY

*By courtesy of Indian Museum,  
South Kensington*



a LETTER FROM THE EAST INDIA COMPANY  
AND CROMWELL'S ENDORSEMENT



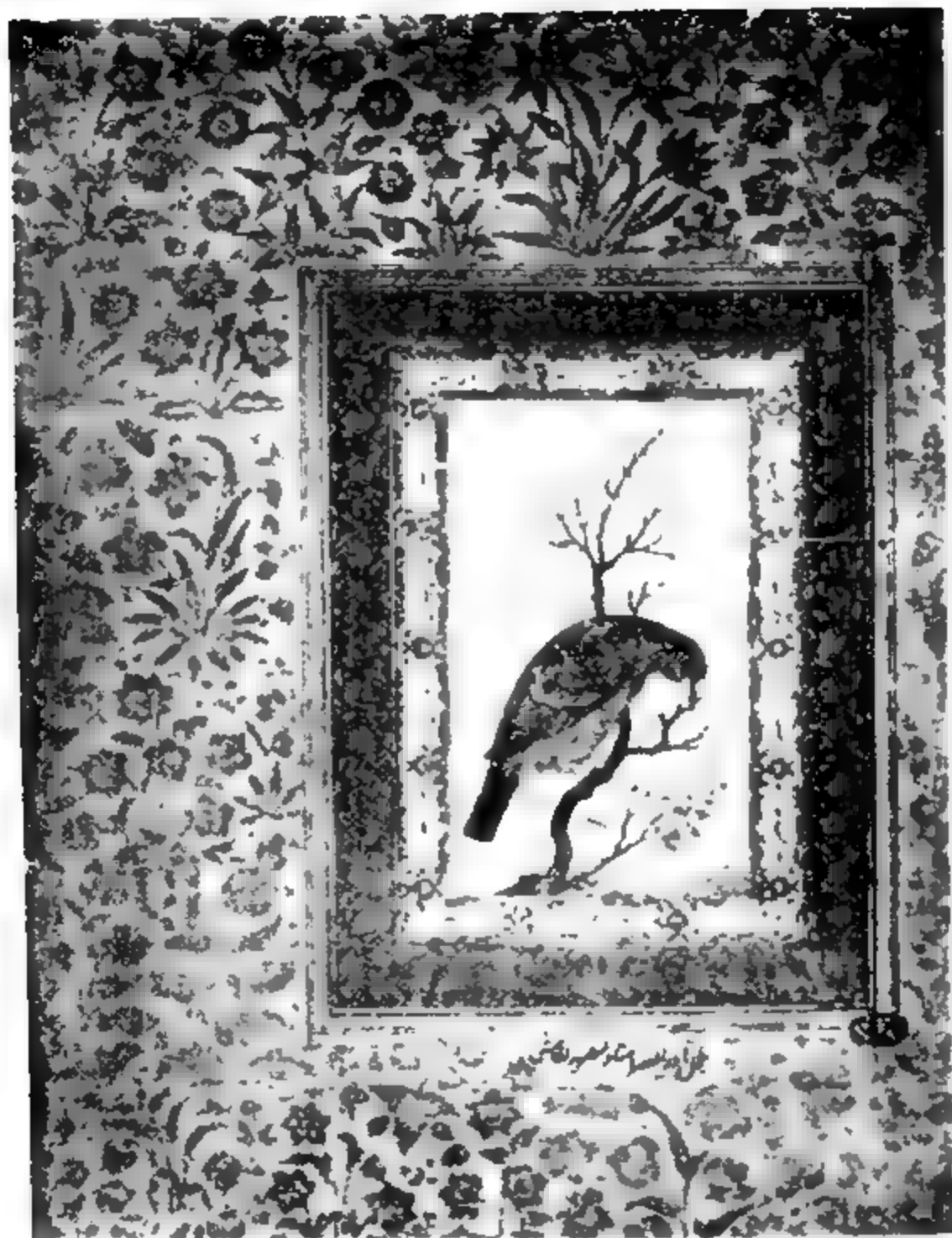
(b) SIR THOMAS ROE





A MOGUL COURT    AMBASSADORS AND PORTUGUESE  
MISSIONARIES IN ATTENDANCE

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



HIMALAYAN BLUE-THROATED BARBET

Artist : Ustad Man Sur, Jahangir's Court Painter of Birds and Animals

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) CRYSTAL BOWL

Early seventeenth century, probably Agra work  
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(b) JAHANGIR'S GREEN JADE DRINKING CUP

Mogul Delhi work, 1613  
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*



(a) PORTRAIT OF SHAH JAHAN

By Bichitr

By courtesy of Indian Museum,  
South Kensington



(b) PRINCE SALIM

Artist : Bichitr (Mogul School  
Shah Jahan)

By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington



(c) NUR JAHAN FEASTING WITH HER LADIES

By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington





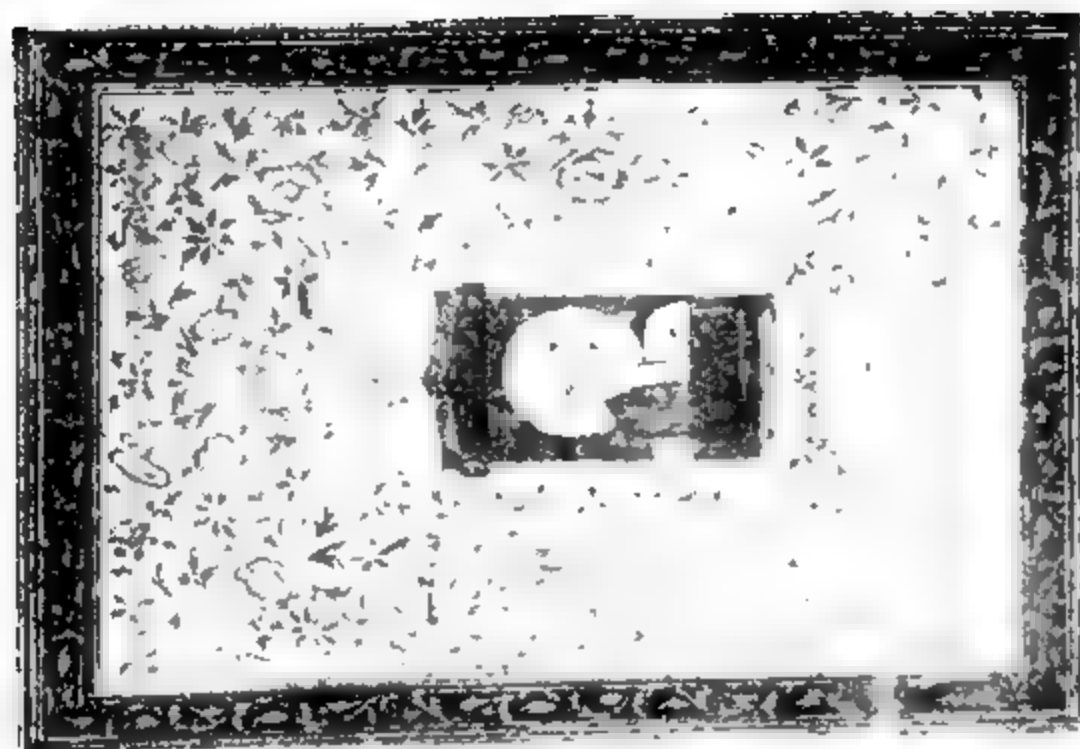
PAGE FROM DARA SHIKOH'S ALBUM,  
WITH THE INSCRIPTION TO HIS WIFE  
*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



THE OLD MILL ALE

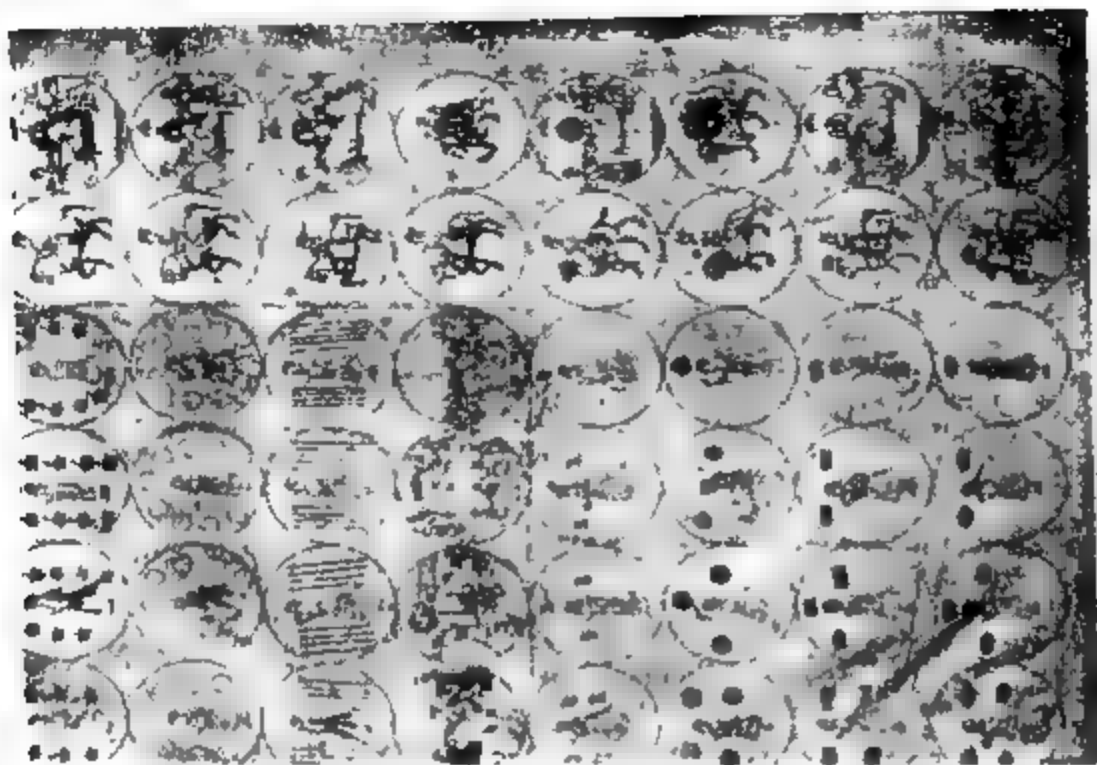
[illegible]

1891-1892



# 6.1 RANGE, B.N. O'DAGL.

By means of Indian labor, which has been



(c) INDIAN CARDS

*By permission of the Secretary of State  
for India in Council*



a TENT PANEL

Mogul Embroidry, early eighteenth century

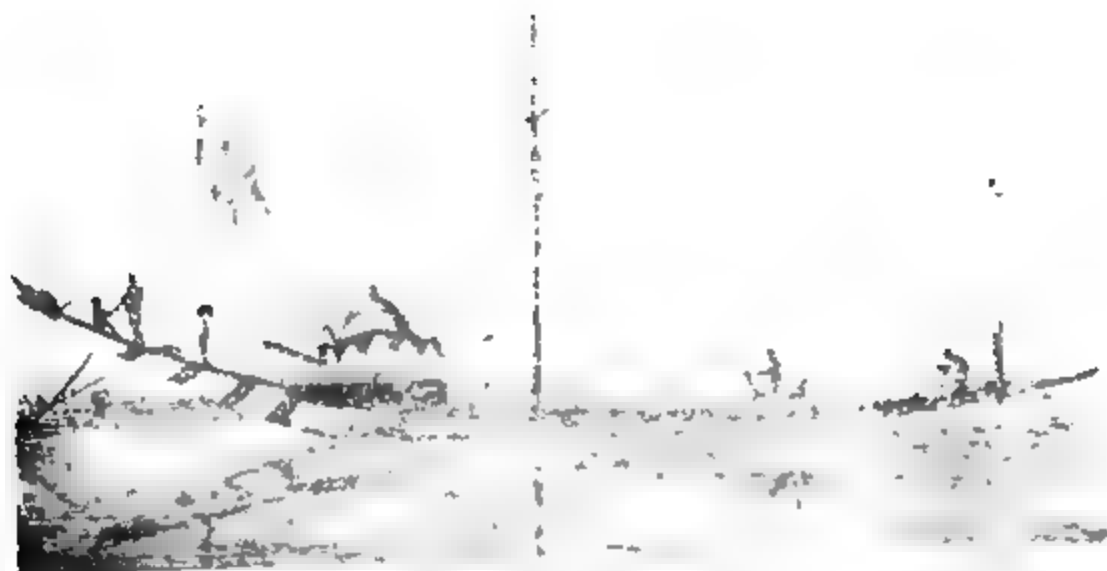


(a) EMBROIDERY PANEL FROM  
SHIELD PAD

Rajput Works, c. 1700

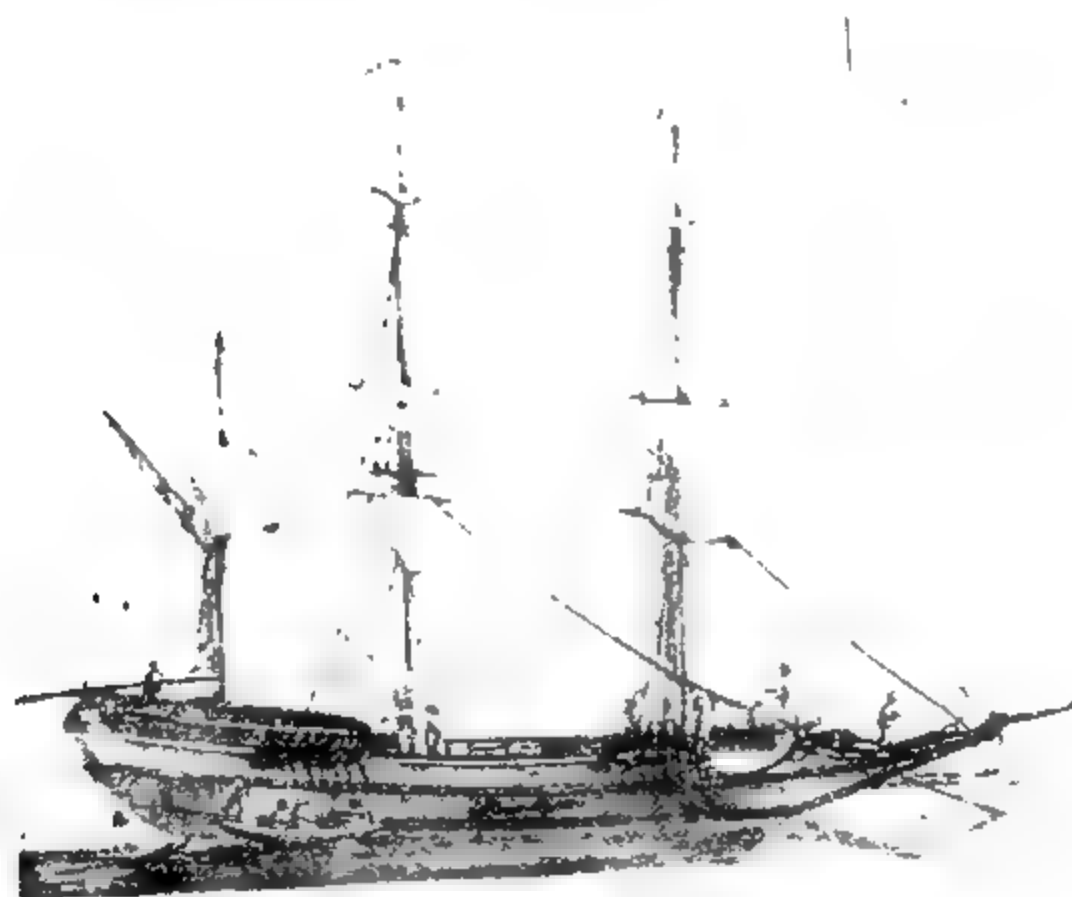
*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*





(a) A "FYL-TCHARNA"  
From "Les Hindous"

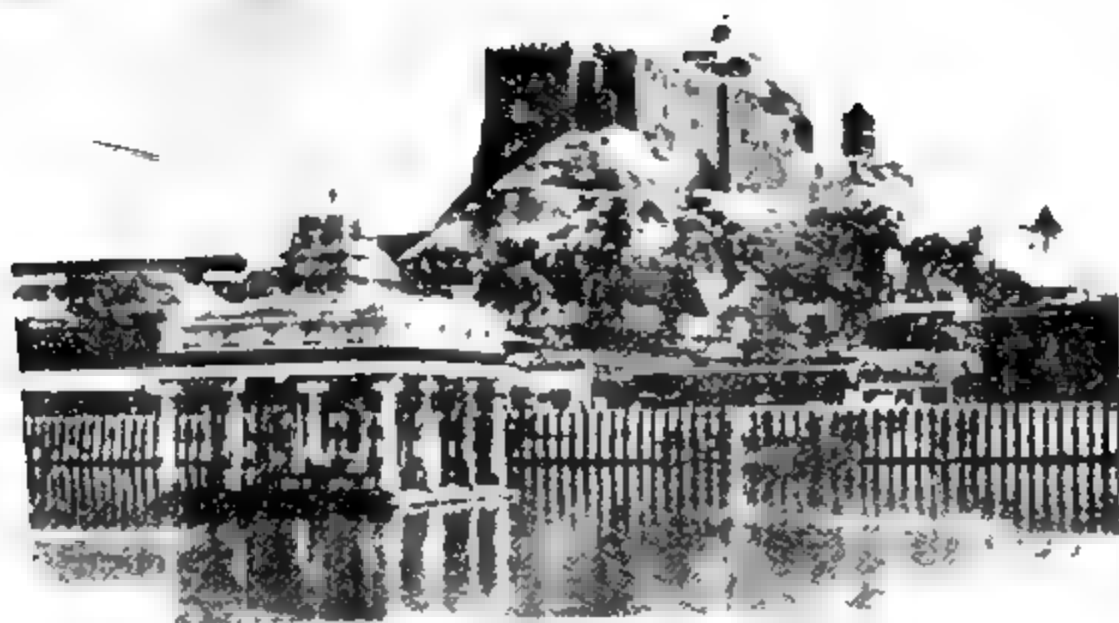
*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*



(b) INDIAN "GRAB"  
From "Les Hindous"

*By permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council*

PLATE XLVIII.



a THE FORT TRICHINOPOLY  
*By courtesy of 'The Times of India' (Copyright)*



(b) CLIVE



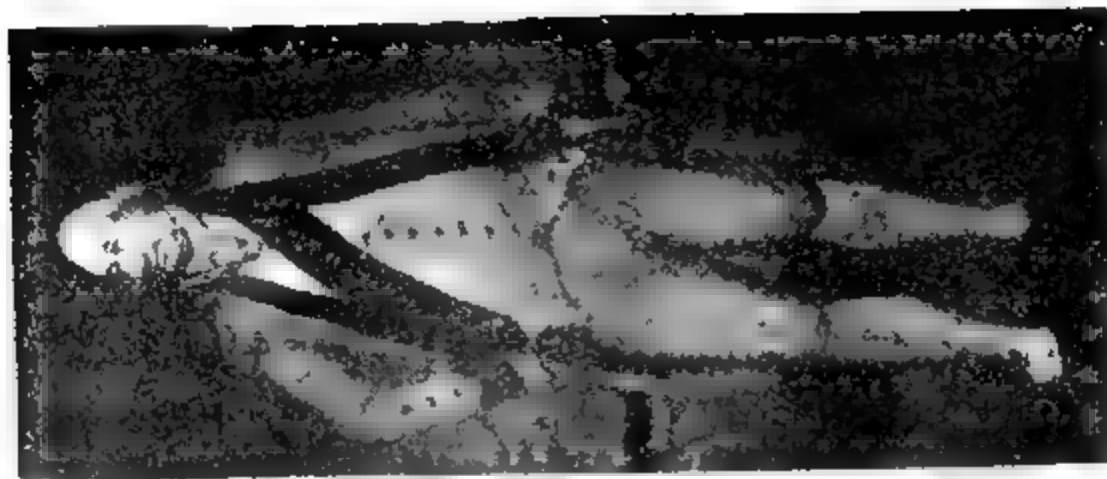
(c) DUPLEIX



FORT WILLIAM, CALCUTTA

From an early nineteenth-century print

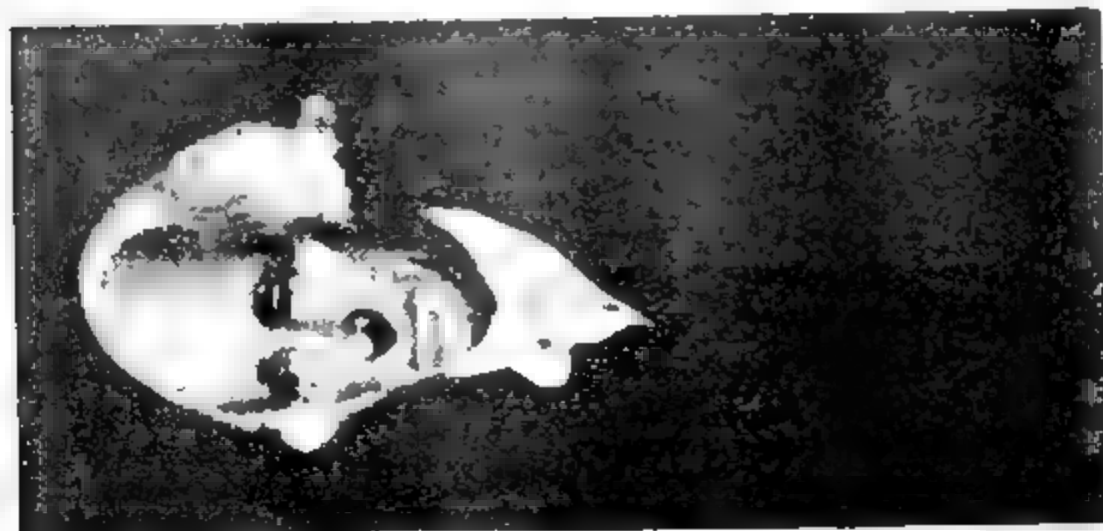
*Fort William, Calcutta, India, from the north*



(a) LORD CORNWALLIS  
By permission of the Secretary of  
State for India in Council



(b) TIPPU SULTAN  
By permission of the Secretary of  
State for India in Council



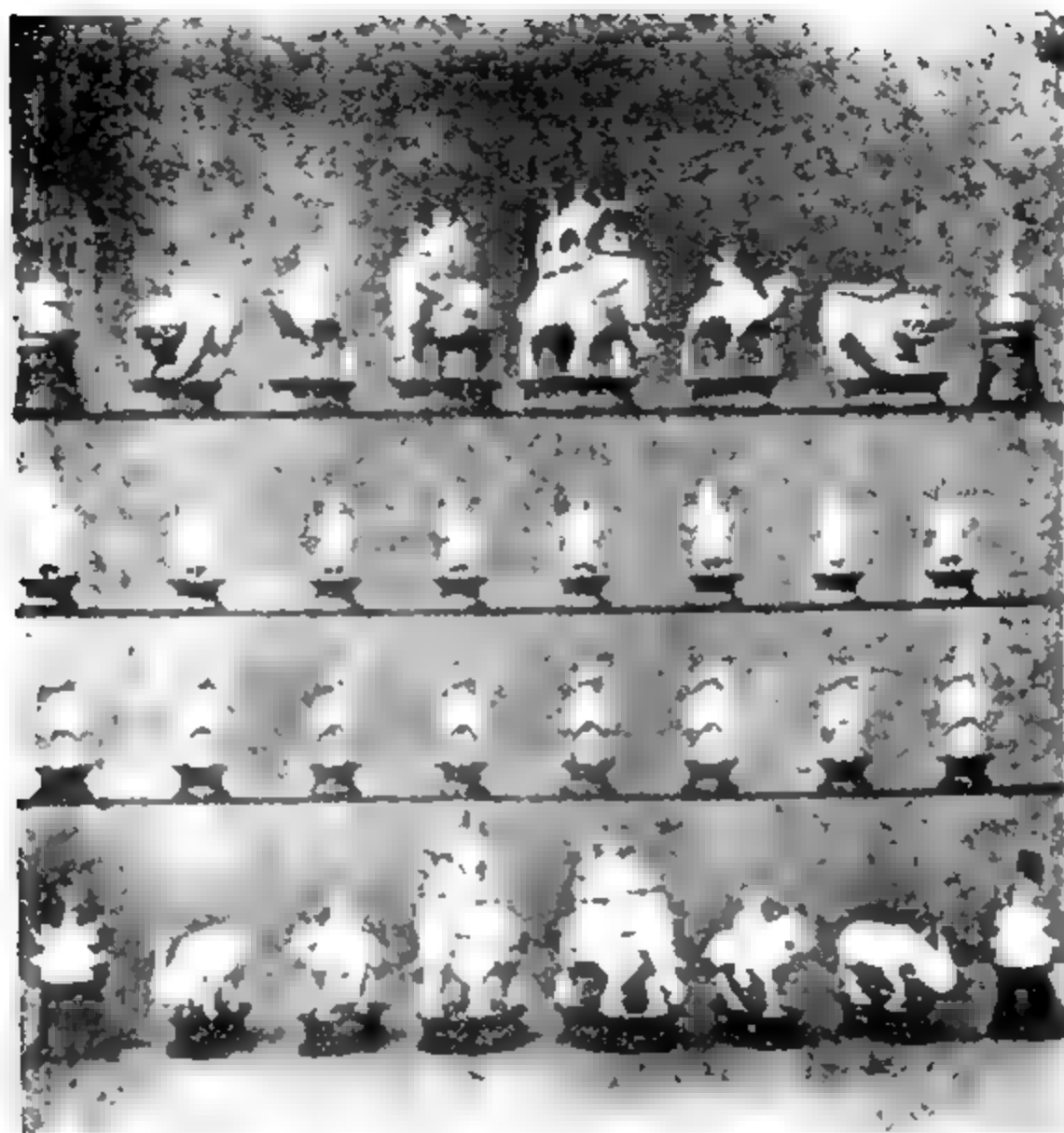
(a) WARREN HASTINGS  
Artist unknown  
By courtesy of M G Dashi and Co



EMBARKING AT MADRAS

From an Aquatint in colour, published 1837

By authority of the *Panor. Geography*



IVORY CHESSMEN, 1790

Pieces represent officers and men of the East India Company and  
Tippu Sultan's army

*By courtesy of Indian Museum, South Kensington*

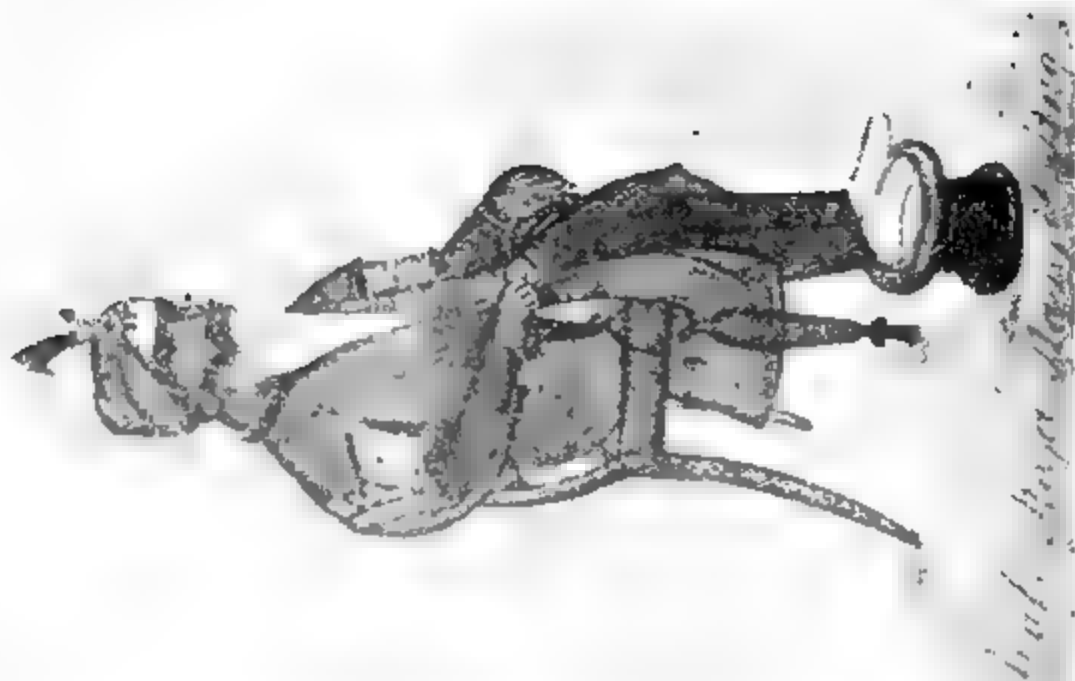


PANORAMA OF SURAT, 1840

*By permission of the Government, for publication in C. and*



(a) LORD WELLESLEY  
*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery*



(b) RANJIT SINGH  
*By permission of the Secretary of  
State for India in Council*



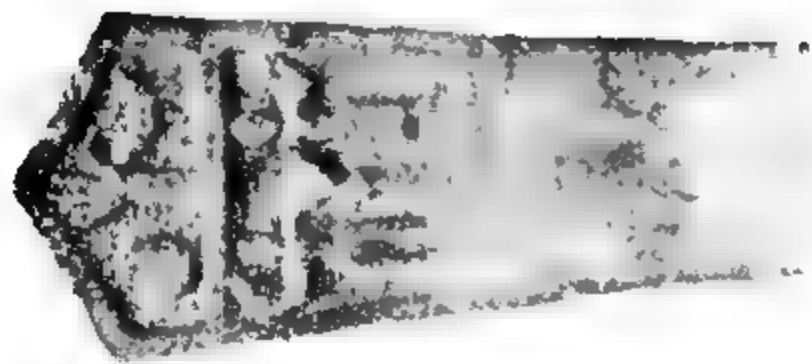


AN OFFICER OF NIZAM'S ARMY  
*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery*



(a) ANCIENT AHOM TEMPLE, SIBSAGAR, ASSAM

*By courtesy of "The Times of India"*



(b) COMMEMORATIVE SUTTEE  
STONE

To a Brahman woman, Dholpur, 1579  
*By courtesy of India Museum, South Kensington*



THE "EARL BALCARRES," LAST INDIAMAN,  
1417 TONS, BUILT AT BOMBAY IN 1815

*Balcarras, Earl of the Parker Garden*



P. AND O. COMPANY'S PADDLE STEAMER "PRECURSOR,"  
BUILT IN 1841 FOR THE INDIAN MAIL SERVICE

*By courtesy of the Porter Gallery*

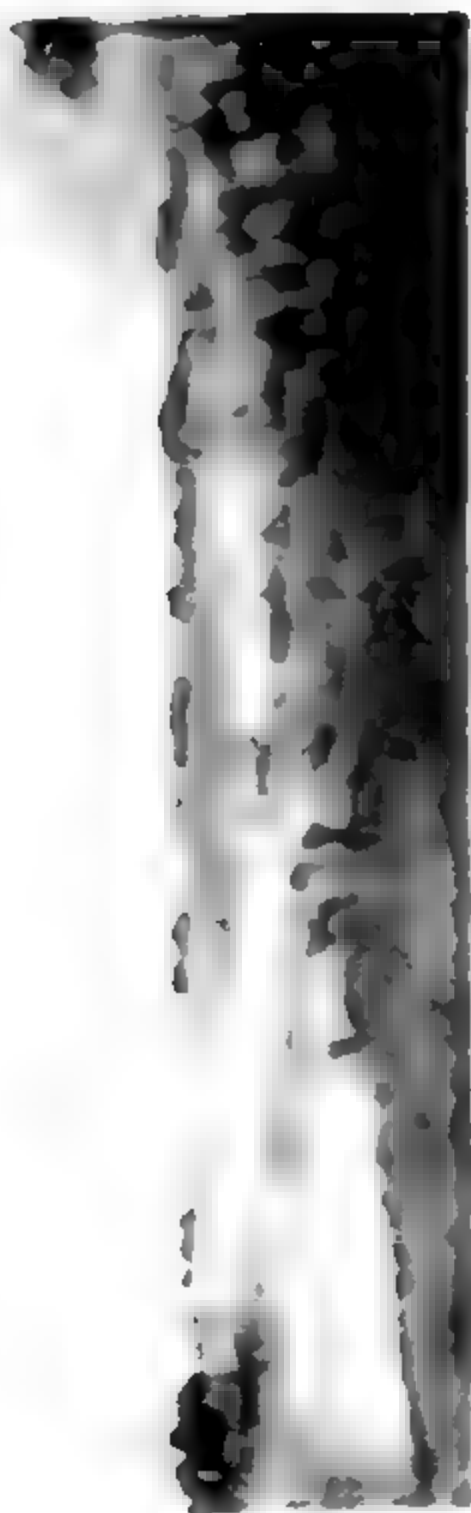


PLATE LX.



(a) SIR ROBERT SANDEMAN



b) LORD LAWRENCE  
*From the original painting in the  
Gulldhall Art Gallery London*

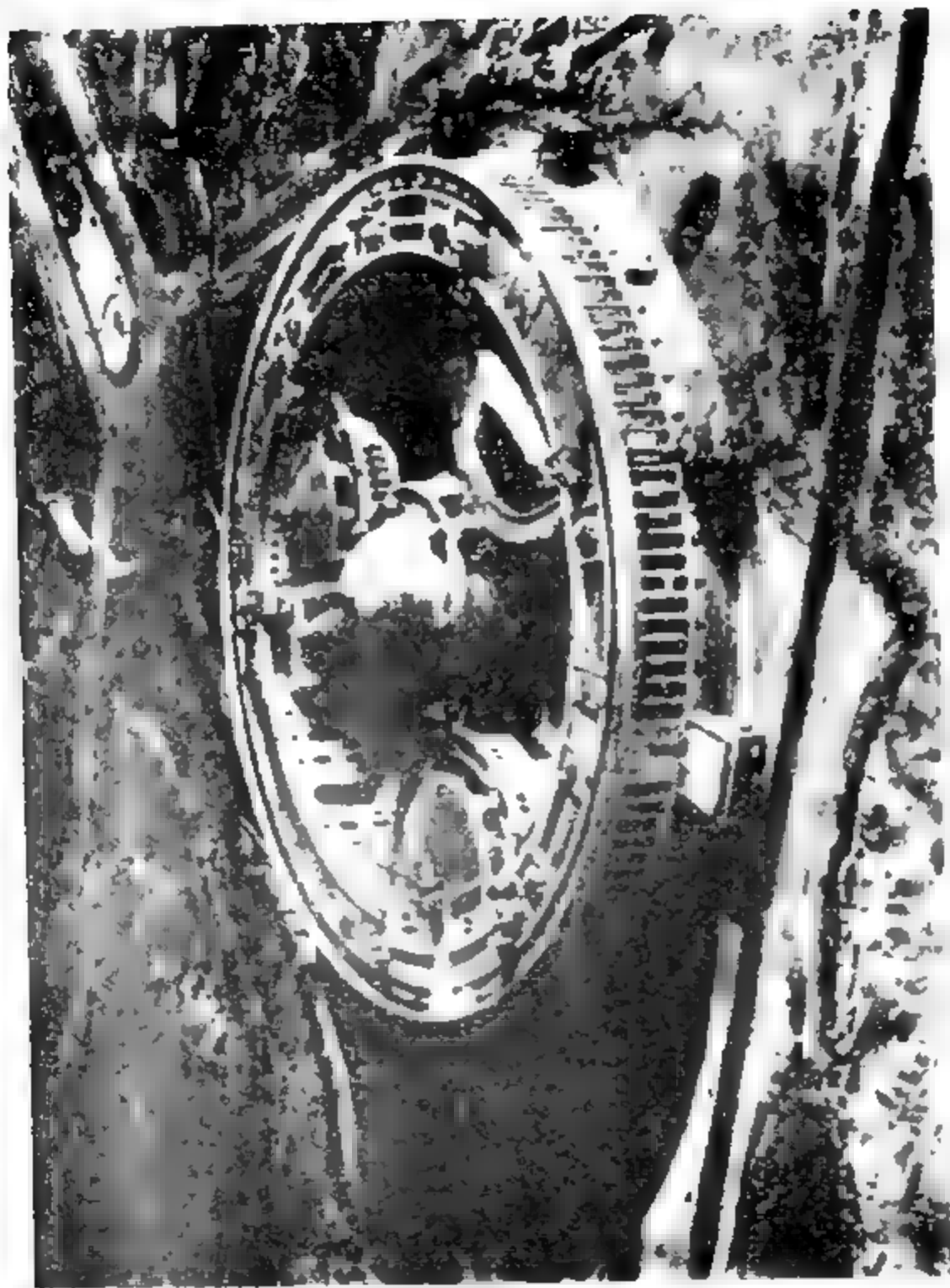


c) LORD CURZON OF  
REDCLIFF

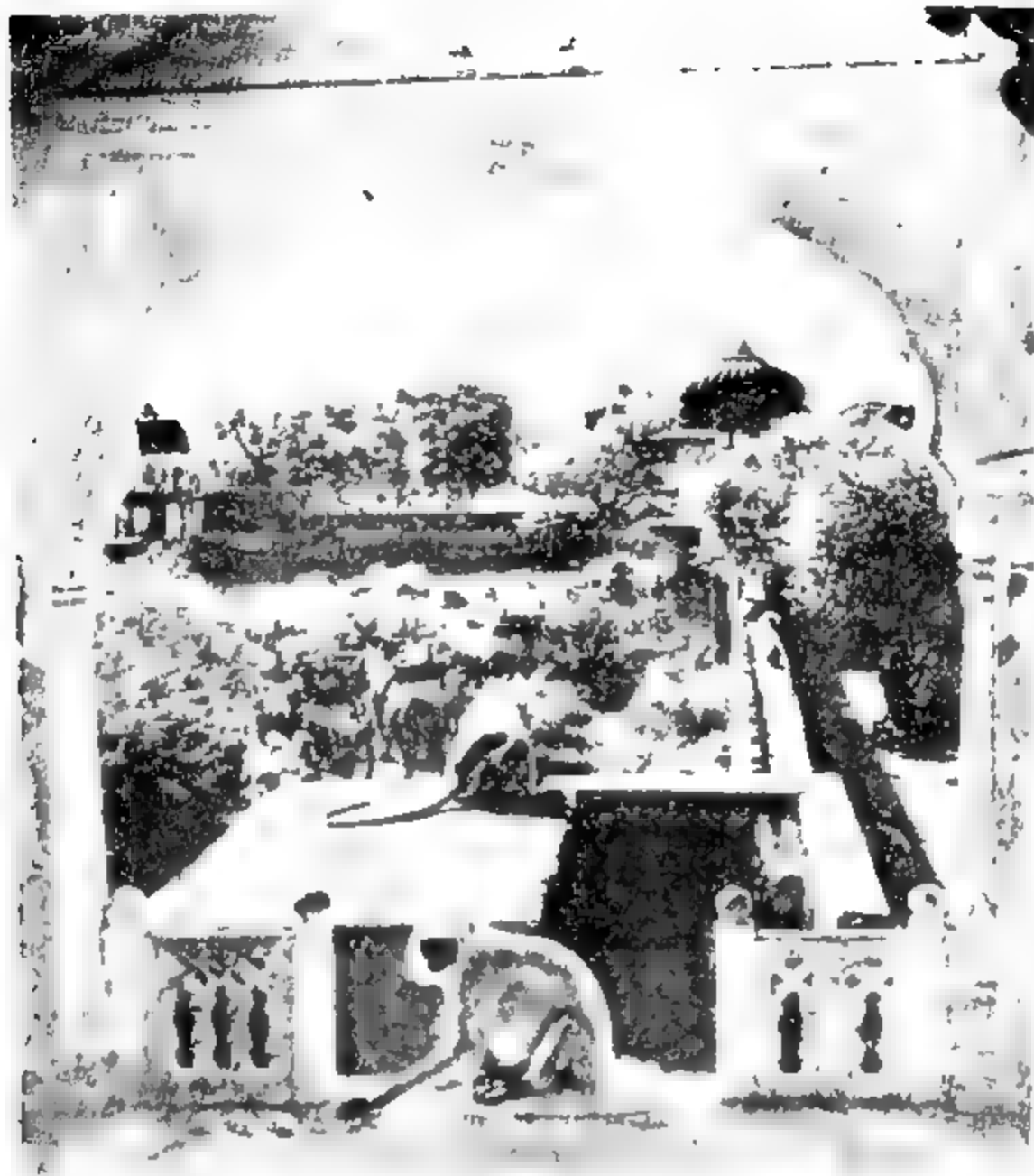


THE KHAIBAR PASS

*Central Press Photos Ltd.*







*Central Press Photos Ltd*

ANCIENT INDIA : AN OLD RAJPUT CASTLE, JAIPUR

PLATE LXIV.



INDIAN COINS

*By courtesy of the British Museum*

**Kanishka**

**Andhra Dynasty**

**Demetrius**

**Eukratides**

**Gold piece  
of  
Claudius**

**Copper Token  
Coin of  
Mohammad  
Shah  
Tughlak**

**Coin of Horse Sacrifice  
Samudragupta**

**Vijayanagar  
Empire**

**Jahangir-Portrait**

**Jahangir  
Zodiacal Mohr**

**East India Co.  
Half Pagoda Madras  
18th cent.**

**Rupree  
Bengal**

**Mohur  
1835**

**Mohur  
1835**

**INDIAN COINS  
Key**



## PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Plain Afridis. Strongly held advanced posts, the use of air forces and, above all, the civilizing influences of motor roads across the border, with the increasing use of cars by tribesmen wishing to patronize the bazaars of the frontier towns in British India, all tend to improve the situation. But the North-West Frontier remains an ever-present anxiety and danger. In the event of war the four or five thousand railway lines leading to the points of concentration would have to be guarded against possible sabotage.

It must also be remembered that, notwithstanding the huge population of India, comparatively small bodies of invaders have in the past often succeeded in overcoming all opposition and making their way through to the plains have established themselves as conquerors. The military forces in India must be able to resist invasion should it come.

There is another consideration, and this directly affects the proportion of British, as distinct from Indian troops that are necessary. In times of peace there is the constant obligation to deal with local disorder beyond the resources of the police. These disturbances are communal or religious, and the most authoritative intervention is naturally one in which there can be no bias, real or suspected, on either side. It is on this account that British troops in the proportion of eight to seven Indian soldiers are ear-marked for internal security. The field army is distributed in peace time throughout India and can therefore be called upon to deal with communal outbreaks as they arise. On mobilization these units would be moved to their points of concentration. The limiting factor, therefore, in determining the numbers retained for internal security is the minimum necessary for this purpose throughout India when the rest of the troops are assembled elsewhere for dealing with external danger.

With the constitutional progress of British India there has grown up the ambition of its political leaders to create a national army. This, under the most favourable conditions, must for some time be a slow process. But steps towards the "Indianization" of the Indian Army have already been taken.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

In 1918 Indians were made eligible for King's commissions. Before that date Indian officers, for the most part promoted from the ranks, were given Viceroy's commissions which ranked their holders below all British officers. The scheme for the provision of these Indian officers (who will eventually replace those with Viceroy's commissions) developed from the reservation of vacancies at Sandhurst into the establishment of an Indian military college on similar lines. It is intended in process of time to substitute Indian for British officers throughout the Indian army, Gurkha formations excepted. Until recently the fighting units of the Indian Army were almost entirely infantry and cavalry. But the Indian Army of the future will be of all arms, including artillery. This will entail the formation of an entirely new regiment of Indian artillery and the establishment of purely Indian administrative services.

Indianization presents great difficulties apart from the problem of communal differences. The British organization of the Indian Army has not, by its nature, given any of the more responsible posts to Indian officers in the past: and the country has not a large supply of young men with long traditions of leadership in the army behind them. The policy for nearly eighty years has been to recruit from selected areas and special races such as the Punjabi, the Pathan, the Sikh and the Maratha. From peoples of widely contrasting qualities and with varying degrees of martial tradition<sup>1</sup> an Indian national army is to be formed, in which Indian officers will lead men of different races, and in which public opinion will have general confidence.

The demand of British-Indian politicians for the Indianization of the Indian Army is based on the perfectly natural feeling that until India can undertake her own defence, apart from the protection of the British Navy, on which the whole empire still depends for its existence, she cannot achieve the measure of self-government towards

<sup>1</sup> The Punjab with about 20,000,000 inhabitants supplied 349,688 combatant recruits for the Great War, and normally provides 62 per cent. of the whole Indian Army, if the 19,000 Gurkhas (who are foreigners) are excluded. Bengal with about 46,000,000 inhabitants raised 7117 combatant recruits in the same period and normally furnishes no recruits for the regular Indian Army (*Ind. Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I, *passim*).

which she is aiming. But the movement eastward of the forces of world-unrest is a definite danger to the peace and security of India; and the passes of the North-West Frontier stand, as they have stood through the centuries, a menace to the country. India by herself cannot stand alone and the trend of events for a hundred and fifty years has laid upon Great Britain the obligation to protect the peoples who have learnt to rely upon her for defence and tranquillity.

Three influences have shaped the history of India. Two came by invasion through the north-west passes, the third came from over the sea. The Indo-Aryan descent upon the country gave India her oldest and most powerful culture, the religion of Brahmanism and the concentration of caste, her deep philosophy and the idealism of Hindu art. The Muhammadan conquests brought the doctrine of universal brotherhood in religion and the civilization of Islam to become an established institution in the country; but also to create the communal strife which has existed with varying intensity for nine hundred years. The third great influence, the most important politically in India today, is the westernization of the educated classes which came with the rise of British supremacy and the eventual establishment of the stability of order throughout the country. This influence of western political ideas has brought British India to the brink of a new era, in which she is to be largely ruled by Parliamentary government, and to which the States will contribute by their share in an All-India federation taking its due place as an integral part of the British Empire.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1905-1910. Lord Minto Viceroy
- 1909. Morley-Minto Reforms (Indian Councils Act).
- 1911. Coronation Durbar of King George V and Queen Mary.  
Delhi the new capital.  
Bengal reunited.
- 1914-1918. World War.
- 1916-1921. Lord Chelmsford Viceroy.  
Declaration of 20th August.

## A HISTORY OF INDIA

1919. Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (Government of India Act).  
Rowlatt Act.  
Third Afghan War.  
1919-1920. Waziristan Campaign.  
1920. Mr. Gandhi started Non-Co-operation.  
1921-1926. Earl of Reading Viceroy.  
1921. New Indian Legislature and Chamber of Princes inaugurated.  
Moplah Rebellion.  
1926-1930 Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax) Viceroy.  
1927. Appointment of Statutory (Simon) Commission.  
1930-1932. Round Table Conference (three sessions).  
1930. Mr. Gandhi's "Civil Disobedience" Campaign.  
Red Shirt Movement.  
1931. Communal Outbreak at Cawnpore.  
Lord Willingdon Viceroy.  
1934. Bihar earthquake  
1935. Quetta earthquake  
Government of India Act.

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# INDIA 1935

### English Males

### Indian States

Imperial Airways Airports

### Imperial Army Main Railways

The boundaries of the new provinces of Sind & Orissa are approximate only.

T I B E T

B	A	Y	O	F	
B	E	N	O	A	L

Admiral  
Islands

